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ABSTRACT

This document contains 14 individual papers by prominent scholars who provide a historical perspective on current educational reforms. The three essays in part 1 examine some of the major changes in educational development and reform. These include: (1) "Antiquarianism and American Education: Assimilation, Adjustment, Access" (Patricia Graham); (2) "Recent History of U.S. Governance" (Michael Kirst); and (3) "Historical Perspectives on School-based Social Services in the United States" (Michael Sedlak). The three essays in the second part examine the controversies surrounding questions of equity and multiculturalism in American education. These include: (4) "The Educational Equities in Historical Perspective" (David Kirp); (5) "The Construction of Ethnic Diversity and National Identity in the Public Schools" (Reed Ueda); and (6) "Multiculturalism and History: Historical Perspectives and Present Prospects" (Gary Nash). Some of the current major reform efforts are addressed in three essays in part 3. These include: (7) "Standards in American Educational History" (Diane Ravitch); (8) "Reinventing Schooling: Utopian Impulses and Historical Scoreboard" (David Tyack); and (9) "A History of the Choice Debate in American Education" (Paul Peterson). The five essays in part 4 examine the six national education goals from a historical perspective. These are: (10) "School Readiness and Early Childhood Education: Some Historical Perspectives" (Maris Vinovskis); (11) "Dead End or Detour? School Leaving in Historical Perspective" (Joseph Kett); (12) "Rhetoric and Reform: The American High School Curriculum 1945-1990" (David Angus and Jeffrey Mirel); (13) "Literate America: High-Level Adult Literacy as a National Goal" (Carl Kaestle); and (14) "From 'Reefer Madness' to 'A Clockwork Orange'?" (William Reese). References accompany each article. (LMI)

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HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE CURRENT EDUCATION REFORMS

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Editors

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HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE CURRENT EDUCATION REFORMS

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INTRODUCTION

Diane Ravitch and Maris Vinovskis

American education is, again, in the midst of a period of doubt and self-examination. Propositions that once appeared to be platitudes are subject to debate and scrutiny. Criticisms that were previously dismissed as marginal have become part of the central discussion. No aspect of education--its governance, its quality, its cost, its effectiveness, its mission--has escaped intense review in recent years.

To historians, it may seem that there has never been a decade free of complaint about the schools and about society's other educational institutions. But policy makers, parents, employers, and other worried citizens are not content to be told that plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose. They see problems, and they want answers, or if not answers, then at least some effort to find constructive solutions. They are right to seek change and to demand improvement, and they are right to ignore the voices of reaction who counsel complacency, inaction, and ultimately, inertia. We Americans have a venerable tradition of reform; we believe that a combination of intelligence, goodwill and energy can solve even the knottiest problems, and nothing in this collection of essays should discourage that spirit of pragmatism and optimism.

As policy makers and the public venture forth once again into the troubled waters of educational reform, they need the knowledge, experience and wisdom that history provides. Why reinvent the wheel? Why pursue a path without knowing what happened the last time around? Just as it would be foolish and self-defeating to enter military combat without a plan and without knowledge of the terrain and of one's allies and adversaries, so reformers dare not venture forth without considering the sources of their ideas and the experiences of the past.

At a time when social, political and economic change seems to have become a constant in human affairs, it seems safe to predict that the improvement of education will be a high priority in our society as well as in other modern societies. The imperative of developing human capital has surged to the forefront as an issue of signal importance. Modern societies now recognize what Horace Mann claimed more than 150 years ago, that "intelligence is a primary ingredient in the Wealth of Nations." But even though the cultivation of human capital has become a high priority, educational systems continue to be riddled with inefficiencies, low standards, and poor performance. And the continued evolution of society has produced a growing underclass whose young all too often view schooling with skepticism and even disdain, as well as a middle class whose young view schooling as the route to a useful credential rather than as a means to an education.

These, and other problems in American society today, have historical antecedents. Unfortunately, many policy makers and analysts believe that current problems are new and unprecedented. Implicit in many current writings and actions is the unexamined belief that knowledge of history is not necessary or particularly helpful. This is regrettable because so often in retrospect a broader historical appreciation of the earlier efforts to promote educational change might have provided some useful guidance for those previous school reformers.

To develop historical perspectives on the current education reforms, the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) in the U.S. Department of Education commissioned 14 individual papers by prominent scholars (mostly historians) to analyze recent educational developments. The authors reflect a wide range of views and experiences in the field of education analysis and all of them combine a strong understanding of the past with a keen appreciation of the policy implications of the recent education reforms.

The three essays in part one examine some of the major changes in educational development and reform. Patricia Graham provides a useful overview of some of the educational changes in the twentieth century. Graham discusses how existing schools reflect in part the past agendas of previous school reforms and observes how difficult it is to initiate and implement any new major educational reforms. She documents these points by looking at the issues of the assimilation of immigrants, the adjustment of children to modern life, and the provision of access to high quality schooling for everyone. Although policy makers and the public continue to look to the schools for initiating rapid changes in the education of children, Graham suggests that these institutions respond rather slowly to shifts in policy directions from above.

Michael Kirst analyzes changes in educational governance reform. The years 1900-1920 and 1965-1985 encompass the major shifts in governance, but the results were often unexpected and fragmentary. Overall, he finds a long-term trend away from local control of schools toward the increasing importance of state governments and regulations--though there are still considerable variations in the role of the states today. The federal impact upon public school education has also been increasing since the 1950s. At the same time, the growing presence and power of teacher unions at the local level has placed some additional limitations on policy options. One consequence of these shifts in power has been the diminished discretionary power of local superintendents and school boards.

While many policy makers analysts focus on the changes in the curriculum of schools, they often ignore the important changes in the health and social services provided through these institutions. Michael Sedlak examines the growth in the provision of non-academic services in the schools since the late nineteenth century. Most of the early health and social programs were concentrated in the larger urban areas and were designed for helping the children of immigrants and the poor. Using this historical perspective, Sedlak analyzes the surge of interest since the mid-1980s to expand health and social services in the schools for certain groups of students such as pregnant teenagers and young mothers.

The three essays in the second section examine the controversies surrounding questions of equity and multiculturalism in American education. David Kirp investigates the changing concerns about equity. Prior to 1950, Kirp argues that equity considerations were not a major factor in educational policy. He documents the growing interest in different types of equity during the past four decades and details the swings in reforms designed to eradicate inequities. Kirp illustrates how equity issues have become much more complex and controversial as the more obvious and unacceptable inequities of the past have been addressed partially.

Reed Ueda traces the construction of ethnic diversity and national identity in American education in the twentieth century. He examines earlier public school efforts to forge a national identity as a means of assimilating immigrants. Ueda goes on to analyze the growing celebrations of ethnic differences at the expense of fostering any national identity in the public schools. The shifts in attitudes toward the concept of a "melting pot" are used to illustrate the changing views of ethnic differences. Ueda concludes by discussing the current tensions and problems within the schools in regard to the teaching of ethnic and national identities.

The issue of multiculturalism is explored further in Gary Nash's chapter. He analyzes how the study of history in the schools and multiculturalism have been related. Nash details how many historians in the past depicted unfairly and unfavorably some ethnic groups and cultures. He also analyzes the recent trend in history books away from a narrow male-oriented and Eurocentric perspective toward a more balanced portrayal of American society. Nash is particularly concerned about some of the more recent, extreme Afrocentric formulations of the past which employ questionable historical analyses and implicitly minimize any national commonalities.

The essays in part three address some of the major reform efforts today. Diane Ravitch analyzes the history of efforts to develop coherent and consistent curriculum standards--particularly through the impact of college admission requirements and then through the use of various national achievement tests. She concludes by tracing the more recent efforts to establish national content standards in certain subjects. While as a school reformer she is optimistic about the ability of standards to improve the education of children, her training as an historian makes her cautious about the obstacles and pitfalls that might prevent change.

Groups such as the New American Schools Development Corporation and Whittle Communications are calling for the creation of entirely new schools to transform American education. David Tyack shows how these calls for the reinvention of public schools were present earlier, but failed to have much of a lasting impact. He chronicles the rise and demise of such once-popular educational practices as flexible scheduling, performance contracting, and machine teaching. Tyack admonishes reform advocates today not to overpromise their school innovations, not to try to change everything at once, and to enlist teachers as a key element of any school reform effort.

One of the more controversial issues in school reform is the idea of giving parents a choice of what public or private school their children should attend. Paul Peterson analyzes the changing attitudes toward the role of the public schools in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He then goes on to discuss the emergence of the school choice movement in the 1950s and discusses its more recent developments in communities such as Milwaukee. As he demonstrates, the debate over choice is no longer focused on the efficacy of public schools, but is shifting toward the question of whether poor families in the inner-cities should be given the same options as middle-class families to send their children to private schools.

In September 1989 President Bush met with the nation's governors in an unprecedented educational summit meeting at Charlottesville, Virginia. A year later the Bush Administration and the state governors announced six national education goals for the year 2000. These goals have been reaffirmed by the Clinton Administration and they provide much of the framework and goals for the current education reforms. The five essays in part four examine these six national education goals from an historical perspective.

The first goal is concerned with the readiness of all children to attend school and Maris Vinovskis examines it historically. In the early nineteenth century, initially American parents were eager to educate their young children and approximately 40 percent of all three-year-olds in Massachusetts in 1840 were in school. But early childhood education fell out of favor by the eve of the Civil War and it became necessary to reinvent early education in the Head

Start Program in 1965. Vinovskis then goes on to detail how the goal of school readiness evolved as both the National Governors Association and President Bush placed a high premium on early childhood education in their plans. Despite growing scholarly questions about the long-term efficacy of Head Start, that program is growing rapidly as most policy makers are committed to providing quality early childhood education to all disadvantaged students.

Goal two states that by the year 2000, 90 percent of all children will graduate from high school. Joseph Kett reviews the different ways on measuring dropout rates and analyzes the changes in societal attitudes toward early school leaving. As he points out, prior to the 1960s the emphasis among policy makers was on increasing the average amount of education received rather than focusing on dropping out--two related, but not identical goals. Indeed, reducing the dropout rate became almost an obsession among many educators in the 1960s. Kett also discusses the different perspectives on school leaving today with particular attention to the differences between educators and economists over the nature and value of a high school education.

Improvements in the competency of students in subject matter such as English, mathematics, science, history and geography are the focus of goals three and four. David Angus and Jeffrey Mirel provide an historical perspective on these two goals by analyzing changes in high school curriculum over time. The Committee of Ten in 1893 recommended that all students have a rigorous and prescribed course of study, but Angus and Mirel found that the idea that each student should decide for themselves their own course of study triumphed. One consequence of this ideology has been that the academic share of course-taking has declined over time. However, Angus and Mirel detect some signs that the focus on non-academic subjects may have lessened by the mid-1980s--a shift in educational ideology that is reinforced by the emphasis in goals three and four on specific academic subjects and the call for increased student competency.

Carl Kaestle provides a historical interpretation of goal five, which states that all adults will be literate and possess the necessary skills for good citizenship and economic success. Kaestle examines the complexity of literacy as an issue and charts an evolving, escalating definition of functional literacy in our society. He argues that we can and should interpret goal five to imply that all adults should achieve critical reading skills. This goal is historically unprecedented but has been slowly developing since the 1950s. To achieve it would require schools and adult literacy programs to overcome the barriers to high-level adult literacy that have long been associated with low income, minority status, lack of education, lack of meaningful adult literacy programs, and other factors.

Goal six call for safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools by the year 2000. William Reese examines the changes in societal attitudes towards youth since the 1940s as well as the behavior of students. He found that the definition of what constitutes a safe school has shifted dramatically over time as students, parents, and educators have become increasingly concerned about the nature and extent of violence in our schools. Moreover, Reese found shifts in the worries about illicit drugs in schools from considerable anxiety in the 1930s to less concern in the 1950s. Today, fear of illicit drugs in schools has resurfaced as a major issue--though there are indications that drug use among students may have leveled off. Despite the real and serious problems facing us in regard to safe, disciplined and drug-free schools today, Reese also reminds us that most students continue to be decent and well-behaved individuals.

Overall, The authors of these essays, reflecting quite different intellectual and disciplinary orientations, provide a useful historical context for the current education reforms. They caution us about the tendency of education advocates to exaggerate the benefits of school reforms and to minimize the problems of implementing them. Yet despite the difficulties inherent in reforming schools, they also demonstrate that major changes have taken place in these institutions over time. While studies of past educational reforms do not necessarily provide immediate and specific suggestions for improving our system of schooling today, they do contribute to a better understanding and appreciation of the complex and diverse nature of educational development and change today.

CHAPTER 1

ANTIQUARIANISM AND AMERICAN EDUCATION:
ASSIMILATION, ADJUSTMENT, ACCESS

Patricia Graham

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Americans traditionally have considered their schools mechanisms for social improvement. What the society has felt either unable or unwilling to undertake with its adults, it has expected the schools to accomplish with its children. The needs of this nation have shifted during this century, and with these shifts have come changing and often conflicting priorities for the schools. Citizens viewing the schools at a discrete moment in time often fail to recognize the profound external forces that have buffetted the schools in earlier decades. Thus, they often find it difficult to understand why remnants of previous social agendas for the schools persist in the face of new, contradictory demands upon the schools.[1]

American schools in the twentieth century resemble the battleships of World War II. Large, powerful, cumbersome, with enormous crews, these giants of the ocean go where they are told to go by some distant authority, which presumably understands better than anyone on the ship, including the captain, where and why they should go. Maneuverability is not their strength. When ordered to change course, they do so, but significant delays exist between the time the course direction orders occur and the ship goes in a different direction. The bigger the change in the direction, the longer it takes for the ship to achieve the new course.

In this century American schools have been given several powerful orders to change their courses. In the early years of this century, schools were principally expected to expand and to assimilate the rapidly rising population of children, many of them either immigrants or sons and daughters of immigrants. By the mid-years of the century, schools were not simply to accommodate the children but also to help them to adjust to modern life, increasingly urban, suburban, and industrial, and thus distinct from the rural and small town settings in which their parents had been reared. By the beginning of the last third of the century, the schools were handed the towering moral challenge of providing access to institutions which would effectively serve children of the poor and which would also enroll both black and white children. Finally, by the end of the century schools' directions from the society have again changed, and now schools are expected to achieve high standards of academic learning with all their students.

The teachers and administrators of American schools, like the crews of the battleships, respond valiantly and often courageously to the challenges they are given. Like the battleships, the schools are large, powerful, cumbersome institutions and like the battleships, they are difficult to maneuver. Profound changes in course, which have been asked of American schools in this century, do not come easily or quickly. Americans who suddenly decided in the 1980s that they wanted their children to lead internationally in mathematics and science achievement were disconcerted to realize the schools could not accomplish this goal immediately.

While the battleship metaphor has some utility in understanding schools because like most metaphors, it suggests some helpful and provocative similarities, the circumstances of schools and battleships are not identical. Most important, battleships have not been built since World War II, and their use in military operations has declined precipitously. In the last half of the century we have believed that other forms of military equipment served us better than battleships. All kinds of new, specialized ships have been added to the navy's arsenal: nuclear powered submarines, guided missle destroyers, redesigned aircraft carriers, sophisticated amphibious landing craft. The Navy recognized that the all-purpose battleship needed to be supplemented by other kinds of equipment to serve national needs.

Schools, however, continue to be built and to form the mainstay of our publicly-determined means of rearing our children. They are our all-purpose institution for children. They have not been augmented by the educational equivalent of guided missle destroyers or sophisticated amphibious landing craft. While families and communities are much more powerful influences upon children than their schools, nonetheless, it is the schools that remain the institutions that the public attempts to manipulate to form the children. Undoubtedly society and children would be better served if public policy directed to the young would focus more on family and community supports, television restriction, and health and child care provision, but the focus has remained on the school. In a sense, such emphasis on the school is understandable since defining it in that way makes the problem containable and assignable to a certain segment of the society, the educators. The broader focus, on the other hand, would necessitate changes from all of us and would be not school reform but social reform, which is even more difficult.

During this century Americans have continued to place extraordinary responsibilities upon the schools for a host of matters concerning children. Schools, the all-purpose battleship, have attempted to respond to these multitudinous demands upon them to aid the young. Their efforts have often been heroic, but their casualties have sometimes been high. The schools are not well-equipped or adapted to serve all the many needs of American children. Our children require and deserve support from a fleet, not just from a battleship.

An Antiquarian View of American Education

The legitimate concern that Americans have about the educational achievement of their children today often leads them to false assumptions about the academic learning of youth in the past. The current public interest in American achievement is driven in large part by concerns about the United States' economic decline in comparison with other nations. Just as the US once was the unquestioned leader in industrial power and now it is not, sloppy thinkers in the United States have popularized the notion that the relative decline in US economic power reflects a similar decline in American academic achievement. The analogy does not hold.

While the US was once an unchallenged power economically and now it is not, the same circumstance is not true in education. The US' comparable leadership in education was in providing the **opportunity** for all children to attend school and for many to attend college. Indeed, the US did lead the world in expanding educational opportunity to a large, heterogenous population. Simply increasing options for formal education is not the same as assuring that all children excel as a result of these opportunities.

In America we have often been satisfied with the democratic principle that all children could attend. We have not been insistent that all children would not only attend but that they would also all learn.

While attendance is important, learning is vital, and in this century we have concentrated on the former, not the latter. We have believed that if we created institutional structures that would permit free elementary/secondary education for all and that would provide low cost college education for many with multiple options for leaving and re-entering the system, then we would have done all that was necessary. Certainly this was much more than any other country had done for its people, and in this sense we were international leaders in education in the twentieth century.

Our focus has been upon issues of broad educational policy, not upon the exquisitely specific contexts in which adults were supposed to help children learn. By turning our attention to the large issues of building an enduring and comprehensive public educational system, we overlooked the internal realities of what actually was expected of the participants within the system and what they were really doing. We were more interested in creating a system than we were in examining what and how children were taught and what and how much they learned. The former was the purview of policy makers, always more highly regarded than the latter world of teachers and children.

For the first two thirds of this century it has been easy for us to assume that our children were moving smoothly through the grades, mastering the fundamentals and the complexities of English, mathematics, history, and science while learning to work cooperatively, attend school regularly and on time, and becoming ethical and participative citizens. If we judged the schools' adequacy by the performance of American adults in the workforce and in the society, then it appeared that the schools were doing a reasonably good job. Between 1920 and 1940 the percent of youth who graduated from high school grew from 17 to 50 percent. From 1940 to 1970 the growth in high school gradutates continued and then stalled at approximately 75% of the age group. The current rate has increased to 86% when recipients of the GED or high school equivalency certificate are included.[2]

The rate of high school graduates going on to college remained relatively stable at just under 40 percent for the first half of this century, rising to more than 50% by 1965 and currently about 60%. Until relatively recently the white male graduates would then enter the professions, all of which required baccalaureate degrees, and the white color work force. The women graduates predominantly entered the few careers open to them: school teaching, retail sales, secretarial, and nursing. Only one, school teaching, required a college degree.[3]

The remainder of the age cohort would get jobs, which was not difficult since the economy was frequently flourishing. The pay for the men's jobs would usually be adequate to support a family. Wives could stay home and care for the children and participate in volunteer, charitable activities in the community, and husbands could hold the job that provided both personal identity and a salary that would assure self-respect and family authority.

A strong economy that provided a variety of well-paid jobs for persons of varying accomplishments and skills provided the foundation for these patterns of adult life. Extensive formal education and significant academic achievement were not necessary for the vast majority. Since they were neither necessary nor highly valued by the society, they were not acquired.

Thus were the schools judged. They were providing what the society needed: a few, mostly white, men with highly developed academic skills demanded by their work; some, mostly white, women and a few minority men and women, with highly developed academic skills but without jobs that utilized or required their levels of education; and many, white men and women and minority men and women, with quite limited formal educations that were entirely commensurate with their employment options.

The third category, which is limited formal educations with jobs that did not require anything more than that, was by far the largest in mid-century America. These were the individuals who moved into the middle class in the post World War II years on the basis of well-paying jobs, often in settings in which unions bargained for them. Gradually, as higher education grew after World War II with the introduction of the G. I. Bill and the expansion of the public colleges and universities, these new graduates moved into the middle management equivalent of the experienced union workers. Their salaries were also substantial, permitting a comfortable, suburban lifestyle, and their jobs placed few demands upon them for formal knowledge acquired in school or college. They did not need to know foreign languages nor was it expected of them that they either have, or or be able to communicate, deep insights into history or contemporary society.

Many were expected to be good salesmen or as it became known, "to develop skills in marketing." Others were supposed to be knowledgable about finance, "to develop a bottom line mentality." These subjects and skills were not taught in most schools and colleges, and most of the evolving Schools of

Business Administration, where such matters were discussed, frankly did not seek entering students with high academic marks. Learning, at least as measured by grades or test scores, then, was not highly valued or seemingly related to success in many American careers.

While the American economy seemed strong, such union and management employees who were emerging from the American educational system convinced the nation that its schools and colleges were similarly strong. Such union jobs as these, however, are in short supply today, and many middle managers are finding to their profound discomfiture that their jobs are not secure. Further, competition for good jobs, either union or managaement ones, is no longer limited mostly to white men. The additional consideration of white women and minorities for good jobs has further unsettled the status quo.

As the American economy undergoes tremendous realignment, business leaders are calling for employees with very different sets of skills. The schools, they believe, are not producing what American industry needs. Some would even try to place the blame for the failure of American business leadership upon the American schools for not providing the kinds of workers needed in the new world of business. Suddenly, acquisition of high levels of academic skills by high proportions of the American population has become an immediate necessity.

Business calls for improved schools while federal, state, and local governments proclaim school reform. Many educators, frequently too anxious to please those in power in the society and frequently too insecure to explain and to justify their educational judgments, have adopted with alacrity this new demand that all students must achieve "world class" standards by the year 2000.

Sensible educators know that this is utter foolishness. They recognize that profound changes must occur in American society if such appropriate and legitimate goals are to be achieved. When so many children live in families and communities that are in utter disarray, when so many live in abject poverty without sufficient food, health care, or adequate housing, then meeting academic goals is inevitably secondary to achieving decent conditions of life. When so many children live in families and communities where learning has never been taken seriously, where books are never read, where television is watched extensively on a daily basis, where immediate consumption is accepted and deferred gratification unknown, and where the sports page of the newspaper is the only section regularly studied, then such academic goals are remote from the experience, expectations and imagination of many Americans. Accomplishing these goals, therefore, will require profound changes in these adults' self-definition and in their attitudes toward their children, their country and the needs of both.

The argument thus far has been that American schools have responded adroitly and efficiently to what the nation asked them to do. What the nation has needed over the century from its schools has varied, and thus the schools' emphases have varied as well. What has been universally true, however, is that the schools have never educated all their students well, as they are now being asked to do. They have always educated some very well. While many who have received the excellent educations have been children of the affluent, in the United States to our immense credit there has always been opportunity for the child of the poor and for the child of color to succeed as well. Many have succeeded, but the system has been organized to benefit occasional children of poverty or color, not all such youngsters. Similarly it has been organized to benefit a higher proportion of the children of the affluent, but neither has it been made clear to those children that achieving academically was necessary for their subsequent success in life. In fact, good jobs and the good life did not require significant academic achievement, and until quite recently most Americans have not sought such learning for themselves, their children or their employees.

Probably the best single indicators of the organization of American schooling that benefits children of the affluent over children of the poor have been the per pupil expenditure in school districts for children and average teachers' salaries. Currently the highest per pupil expenditures generally are in suburbs where housing is expensive, and consequently family incomes are likely to be high in order to live in such enclaves. Local funds for schools come largely from property taxes, so communities with expensive properties have more money available to pay for their schools. Such families and communities are also likely to have money available to support other activities that help their children: supervised recreational programs with good equipment, access to museums and often travel programs for high school students, or additional wholesome instructional programs, such as gymnastics or ice skating. Most important, these communities provide models in their adult populations of individuals who are successful and who have had extensive schooling and believe that the schooling accounts in part for their success. Deerfield, Illinois is one such community. Its annual per high school pupil expenditure is $10,510, and its average salary for high school teachers is now over $52,000. Less than forty miles away in another suburban district, Aurora East, is a very different community with a much lower tax base and hence its per high school pupil expenditure is $4322, and its average high school teacher salary is just over $30,000. Not surprisingly, test scores are very different as well: an average of 305 and 325 for the Illinois reading and mathematics test for high school juniors in Deerfield and of 152 and 120 in Aurora East.[4]

This pattern is typical of many states. In Massachusetts, for example, affluent Wellesley with a median home price in 1992 of nearly $299,000 spends $7310 per pupil and has average annual teachers' salaries of $42,000 while rural Winchendon with a median home price of $86,500 spends an average of $3794 on its pupils and pays its teachers an average of $27,900. Not surprisingly 42% of Wellesley's students demonstrated "solid understanding of subject matter on Massachusetts educational assessment tests" while only 14% of Winchendon's pupils did.[5]

Direct comparisons of investment (per pupil expenditure and teachers' salaries) with outcomes (average test scores) mask many differences among children, their communities, and their schools. Nonetheless, what they reveal here is that Deerfield and Wellesley spend roughly twice what Aurora East and Winchendon do on their students and teachers, and the students in Deerfield and Wellesley score more than twice as highly on standardized tests.

These kinds of results are not new. Discrepancies of these kinds have long characterized American education. What is new is that the public is now concerned about the performers at the low end. Previous attention has focused upon the upper end of the distribution, but now as we are told to be aware of the new needs for mental agility for the American work force, we are attentive to academic performances of historically low-achieving neighborhoods. The schools find their courses again being altered with new orders from on high to change direction. This demand for universal academic achievement is the fourth major course change for the schools in this century, following earlier demands for assmiliation, adjustment, and access.

Assimilation

For the first quarter of this century the schools performed the astonishingly successful transformation of taking many children whose family culture and often whose family language was foreign and converting them into adults who were Americans. The schools accomplished this extraordinary feat in large part because many of the parents were eager for their children to become acclimated in the new land that they had chosen and in which many of the adults would never feel at ease. They hoped, though, that their children would achieve the dream for which they had emigrated, whether that be economic success, social opportunity, or religious and political freedom. Since many families lived with others of similar heritage and since many families attended religious institutions with their former countrymen, the school was the primary means through which the children of immigrants encountered American institutions.

Concern for converting youngsters into loyal Americans was not unique to the early twentieth century. From the nation's beginnings in the late eighteenth century, one of its leading educational architects, Benjamin Rush, had urged, "Let our pupil be taught that he does not belong to himself, but that he is public property. Let him be taught to love his family but let him be taught at the same time that he must forsake and even forget them when the welfare of his country requires it."[6] Although the issue for Rush was building allegiance to a nation that was new, the manifestation of that sentiment more than a century later was building allegiance to a nation that was no longer new but was new to these pupils and their families. The idea that one of the school's chief obligations was to develop commitment to the American nation persisted.

One of the reasons that the United States led in developing a comprehensive school system was that this country faced a special challenge. Most of the new Americans came from countries with well-established governments and national cultures and without significant numbers of immigrants. The task in the United States, however, was both to establish the government and culture as well as to imbue the immigrants with a commitment to it. Furthermore, the success of the novel republican form of government resting on the consent of the governed depended upon the governed being informed. Shrewdly, American leaders from Benjamin Rush, Thomas Jefferson and Horace Mann on recognized that the group of the population with whom it would be easiest to accomplish this feat were the children, and the institutional entity with the leading responsibility was the school. Hence, the push to comprehesive schooling in the United States was driven both by the need to inform the citizenry so they could govern and and the need to assimilate the immigrants so they could be constructive citizens.

Thus, in the early twentieth century the United States faced two challenges that it sought to meet through its school systems: informing the citizens and Americanizing the immigrants. These dual needs pushed this country to develop comprehensive schools through high school before they were common elsewhere.

Many of these schools were rigid in their procedures, forcing the youngsters to adapt their youthful exuberance to the regulation of the emerging school bureaucracies. Many found this difficult and thus were "retained" in grade until they had proved themselves either flexible enough to adjust to the school rules or bright enough to master the material on their own. Figures from New York City schools in 1904 reflect the difficulty these children had in progressing smoothly through the New York City public schools. While grade one had only 23% overage children, the percent who were overage rose to 38% in grade two, 45% in grade three, 49% in both grades four and five, and as children dropped out of school, began to fall to 42% in grade 6, 32% in grade 7, and 25% in grade 8. A few years later Leonard P. Ayres reported that of 1,000 children entering city schools in 1908, then probably the best in the country, only 263 would reach the eighth grade and a bare 56 the fourth year of high school.[7]

The growth of the school populations coincided with the massive immigration in the early years of this century, creating in cities where many immigrants chose to live large, graded schools with newly defined procedures that teachers and administrators were expected to follow. The rural and small town schools with low enrollments and children of different ages all taught together in one or two rooms with a single teacher or a small corps of teachers disappeared rapidly in the twentieth century. What evolved were school systems led by a new breed of educators, not teachers but administrators, who saw their mission not to inspire a love of learning in the younger generation but rather to become what David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot have felicitously termed them, "managers of virtue." Their primary obligation was to assure that these diverse youngsters would grow up to become good citizens, which meant that their skills would be adequate to hold jobs, become homemakers, and avoid the perils of alcoholism or poverty.[8]

In short, the schools' principal mission was moral, to create citizens who possessed the habits of heart and will to function well in this new land and who were sufficiently if minimally literate. The schools understood that their task was given to them by the larger society, endorsed by it, and generally speaking supported by the families and communities in which the children lived.

Some youngsters thrived in this setting and subsequently wrote enthusiastic autobiographical pieces about it, such as Leonard Covello and Mary Antin. Their works are well known, and many of us have inaccurately assumed that the experiences they described were nearly universal. Others, undoubtedly the more typical experience, endured this regimen for as long as they could and quit, acquiring minimal literacy and a profound disinclination toward academic matters. Others also quit early, often because family demands upon them necessitated that they either help at home or work for pay. Some were thankful to leave, others regretful, but none of these latter groups was likely to eventually publish a paean to the schools that the conventionally successful ones did.

Since the principal effort of the schools was to move the children into a smooth adulthood, capable of independence and citizenship, any of these alternatives was satisfactory from the school's point of view. It was always important that some unlikely children did well in the school, and some always did. The proportion who needed to succeed academically was small, while the proportion who needed to move smoothly into the workforce was great. The schools understood this, added vocational education courses to their curriculums with broad support from business and labor and after passage of the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917, with support from the federal government as well.

The phrase widely used to describe this phenomenon of assimilating the immigrants and their children into American society was "melting pot." The ethnic traditions of the immigrants, over ninety percent of whom were European in the early years of the twentieth century, were to be brought together in a large cauldron, heated well and stirred vigorously, and the viscous liquid that would emerge, the essence of Americanness, would be uniform in its consistency but different from any of its component parts, which would be no longer identifiable. The melting pot image dominated discussions of Americanization throughout the first half of the twentieth century when the focus was upon white immigrants from Europe coalescing with other white immigrants from Europe who had come to the United States in earlier generations.

Little effort was made to assimilate the ten percent of the population who were of African ancestry. They had not come here of their own free will but rather as slaves; further, their skin was black and hence their differences with the majority population were not simply cultural but also racial. Much was made of this distinction. For them, for the Native Americans, whose indigenous economies and cultures had been displaced by the Europeans, and for the Hispanics, who had settled in the southwest before the westward migration, as well as for some Asian immigrants, melting pot rules applied differently. Schooling existed for all these groups, and often particular efforts were made in the school to rid them of their own cultural traditions and to get them to accept uncritically the dominant culture of early twentieth century America.

Pronouncements about the education of the Native American capture the flavor of much public sentiment about the educational needs of all the non-Europeans in the United States, who were largely assumed to be bereft of civilization. The Lake Mohonk Conference in 1884 resolved, "Education is essential to civilization. The Indian must have a knowledge of the English language, that he may associate with his white neighbors and transact business as they do. He must have practical industrial training to fit him to compete with others in the struggle for life. He must have a Christian education to enable him to perform the duties of the family, the State, and the Church." Richard Pratt, the founder of the Carlisle school for Indians, allegedly put it more pithily, "Kill the Indian and save the man."[9]

Thus, assimilation into American society or as some would argue, anihilation of family culture, characterized the principal mission of schooling in America in the early decades of this century. Most educators believed that their undertaking was benefical both to the nation and to the individual, and few argued with them. The challenge of forging a nation from these diverse ethnic and racial groups was immense, but by the outbreak of World War II patriotism was rampant in America. The children of the hypenated-Americans were simply Americans, in large part because their schools had taught them so.

Adjustment

The **Report of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education** of the National Educational Association, published by the U. S. Bureau of Education, appeared in 1918 and soon dominated professional discussions of high school education. For the next several decades aspiring teachers fulfilling licensing requirements memorized what the document asserted were "the principal aims in education," and which came to be known as the Seven Cardinal Principles:

1. Health
2. Command of fundamental processes

3. Worthy home membership
4. Vocation
5. Civic education
6. Worthy use of leisure time
7. Ethical character

The rationale for the need for these new principles appeared in the opening sentence of the report, "Secondary education should be determined by the needs of the society to be served, the character of the individuals to be educated, and the knowledge of educational theory and practice available." The report observed that many changes were indeed taking place in the society and that these necessitated changes in secondary schooling. It continued, "As a citizen, he must to a greater extent and in a more direct way cope with problems of community life, State and National Governments, and international relationships. As a worker, he must adjust to a more complex economic order."[10]

Reading these sentiments seventy-five years later, one notes that the requirements of both citizenship and employment have continued to dominate discussions of education and appropriately so. The "international relationships" have also been an enduring issue. Yet the solution of 1918 of "adjusting" to these changes was very different from the present imperative of refocusing schooling upon academic achievement.

Of the seven "cardinal principles" only one, command of fundamental processes, even hinted at academic activities, and it conveyed a sense of primitive academic mastery. The remaining six all were non-academic in their content. High school educators took this emphasis to heart and developed programs that matched the goals. The consequence of these efforts was to minimize the significance of academic learning in many high schools for many students. If the National Education Association and the U. S. Bureau of Education, the forerunner of the U. S. Department of Education, believed these should be the goals of education, then surely this was so, and aside from some isolated academic critics, there was little dissension expressed about these goals. Although written largely by educators, these views fit neatly with the changing economic needs of the nation from agricultural and small businesses to predominantly urban and increasingly large businesses in the years following World War I. This document was as important in its time in setting the tone for discussions of what should be done in the schools as **A Nation at Risk** was sixty-five years later.[11]

If the Seven Cardinal Principles provided the goals for American schools, then the deeper explication of them could be found in John Dewey's magisterial, **Democracy and Education**, published in 1916.[12] This became the Bible of the educational reform movement then emerging, and like the Bible, it was rarely read in full and was suitable for constant reinterpretation. The newly self-conscious professional educators, however, were little given to exegesis. Instead, they turned their profound energies into forming an organization, the Progressive Education

Association, devoted to battling the traditional academic lockstep and replacing it with a commitment to "teaching the whole child."

Since the "whole child" was preponderantly a psychological construct, successful teaching of the whole child meant for many that the child preeminently would adjust and would have good mental health. Such a definition minimized academic learning, just as the Seven Cardinal Principles did as well.

Yet inevitably the child was implicitly -- but not explicitly -- defined by his or her social contexts. School people often tacitly recognized the limits that children's social, economic, gender or racial characteristics placed upon them, and this recognition helped define appropriate "adjustment" for these children. In an era when personality, attitude and vocational interest testing was growing rapidly, these different expectations were codified most clearly in the Strong Vocational Inventory which throughout this period maintained different tests and different scales for boys and girls and men and women. A young woman seeking to establish how her interests fit with those of working professionals had to take the male version of the Strong to learn where her interests might lead her because there was no comparable scale for employed women, allegedly because there were too few to justify creating such a scale. Except for the nation's needs during World War II, the message was clear to young women of the mid-years of the century: be a homemaker.

The Progressive Education Association reached its zenith of public acceptance and recognition in the 1930s, exemplified by its Executive Director appearing on the cover of **Time** magazine in 1938. At that time it was in the midst of sponsoring its best known project, the Eight Year Study, also known as the Thirty Schools Study. The study eventually revealed in the midst of World War II (a time in which most Americans were not much interested in schooling questions) that graduates of the thirty "progressive" schools participating in the study did as well in college as graduates of schools with traditional, college-preparatory academic curriculums. The unwarranted assumption accepted by many educators from these data was that curriculum and pedagogy did not make a difference in the children's subsequent educational performance. Acceptance of this assumption led many to believe that mastery of the curriculum, whatever it was, was less significant than simply participating in the school life. Coming as ~~it~~ they did at a time when attention focussed on adjustment, these findings found a congenial reception among many educators. The Eight Year Study was not reponsible by itself for reducing the emphasis upon academic achievement, but it provided the research justification that reinforced the prevalent anti-intellectual sentiment in America that academic learning was useful for some but not necessary for all.[13]

Today we would probably observe that many of the children in the progressive schools came from homes and communities in which there were many powerful and effective educational activities engaging them: parents who regularly read to them and discussed ideas with them, books in their homes, museums available for visits, travel with guidance and supervision, and, most of all, communities that modeled success based on education and expected the same for their children. The formal program presented by their schools, therefore, was less influential in their lives than the broader educational experiences they were receiving outside of school. Most important, the goals of the schools and the other educational agencies with which the chidlren were involved were either the same, or at a minimum, harmonious.

The assumption that the content of the school curriculum did not matter may have been true for those youngsters with a rich educational environment outside the schools and for whom the other potentially educational agencies did not have goals that were harmonious with the schools'. For those children for whom the school provided the principal route to formal learning, however, the curriculum and pedagogy were extremely important because those youngsters had few opportunities to learn elsewhere what society believed was important to know and to be able to do. The former group with the rich non-school educational experiences were a small minority of American youth, and the latter without rich educational experiences outside school were the vast majority. But the distinction between the role of schooling and the role of other educational activities in a child's life has not been one that has attracted wide attention in America until recently.

We have tended to accept that schooling provided the same experience for everybody, not recognizing that for some schooling was a mere addition of spice to an already wholesome educational recipe. For others, though, it was the entire educational recipe. Spice alone will not suffice as a diet.[14]

While the Progressive Education Association may have provided the research underpinnings for diminishing the significance of academic learning for most children, the operational and bureaucratic justification came with the U.S. Office of Education's sponsorship in 1947 of the Commission on Life Adjustment Education for Youth, chaired by Benjamin Willis, then Superintendent of Schools in Yonkers, New York who eventually became the Superintendent in Chicago. The Commission's reports stressed many of the same themes as the Seven Cardinal Principles. While it alluded to academic matters, it gave its primary attention to children's non-academic educational needs: "physical, mental, and emotional health. . .the present problems of youth as well as their preparation for future living. . .the importance of personal satisfactions and achievements for each individual within the limits of his abilities."[15]

The stimulus for the Commission had come from Charles Prosser, an indefatigable leader of vocational education, who in 1945 had introduced the notion of life adjustment education at a conference and had called for the USOE to establish the Commission. At that time Prosser had argued that 20% of American youth could benefit from an academic curriculum in high school, 20% from a vocational curriculum, and the remaining 60% from "life adjustment training." Acceptance of this formula, while never overt, has dominated high school education ever since.[16]

Access

John Studebaker was Commissioner of the United States Office of Education from 1934 to 1948, and it was under his leadership that the federal government gave its blessing to life adjustment education. Generally the USOE, as it was known, was not a place of power, and Studebaker's dubious achievement in promoting life adjustment education was based partly on his longevity in the office and partly on his catching the final gasp of progressive education before its demise as a national educational ideology in the 1950s.

The next Commissioner to capture and shape America's educational destiny was Francis Keppel, who served from 1962 to 1966. Keppel himself was no exponent of progressive education. Born in 1916, he grew up in a household deeply committed to education but few would describe it as "progressive" as the term was used in his childhood. His father, Frederick Keppel, was dean of Columbia College in New York City at a time when John Dewey was on its philosophy faculty and the campus's northern border, 120th Street, was ofter described as the widest in the world because it separated Columbia College from Teachers College, whose campus was on the other side of 120th Street. Frederick Keppel became head of the Carnegie Corporation in 1923, the foundation in the United States which probably gave more support to education than any other in the mid-years of the twentieth century.

At the height of progressive education's prominence in America and in the depths of the U.S. depression young Frank was sent off to preparatory school at Groton and subsequently to Harvard College. While an undergraduate Frank actively engaged in campus life, becoming acquainted with the new president of Harvard, James B. Conant, and after graduation received a fellowship to study sculpture in Rome immediately before World War II. That year of study in Italy remained Francis Keppel's sole formal postgraduate education. By some standards he had no "qualifications" as an educator but his abilities - nurtured by his home, community, and his schools - far outshone his formal qualifications.

During World War II Keppel helped design the college correspondence courses for servicemen, now known as the United States Armed Forces Institute (USAFI) and the G. I. Bill. After the war, he returned to Harvard to serve as an assistant to President Conant. When Conant exhausted his list of possible deans for the struggling School of Education at Harvard, he turned to Keppel, who in 1948 at the age of 31 undertook to rebuild the school.

What Keppel lacked in formal instruction in education itself, he more than compensated for in intelligence applied to educational issues. He was a smart and well-read man who was deeply concerned about improving the education of all Americans. Moreover, he had the insight into how to organize others to achieve these ends. Such insight is the highest art of politics. Further, he was not identified either personally or professionally with any of the extant ideological strands of the education establishment. More than any other figure in America, he eased the transition from pre-war progressive education with its individualistic emphasis on the child and his or her adjustment to the American education agenda of the last half of the twentieth century with its emphasis upon the needs of groups of children who were not well served by the existing educational structures.

In 1965, eleven years after the critical U. S. Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Board of Education, which prohibited segregation on the basis of race in the public schools, Keppel successfully orchestrated passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which established the principle that children from low-income homes required more educational services than children from affluent homes did. Many believed Keppel was simply interested in access, but a close look at Keppel's agenda reveals that the essence of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education, which was the most expensive element of the bill, was

mandating additional **educational** activities that would enhance the academic achievement of children of the poor.
Such concern for children's learning, particularly impoverished children's learning, was in dramatic contrast to the educational priorities of his predecessors.

Not all children enter school on a level playing field, Keppel argued. Children from wealthier families have more resources devoted to their educations informally than children from poor families. Thus, if it is in the national interest for all our children to learn, then the federal government must supply additional funds to public schools to help them educate the children of the poor. Those youngsters require compensatory education services. Typically this meant more formal instruction in reading and arithmetic. Keppel was not arguing that children of the poor simply adjust to their circumstances of life; he believed they must learn. That was a radical departure from the educational wisdom of his predecessor, Studebaker.

Too many poor children in America (and in most other countries as well) fell behind their classmates in academic achievement. This was true in progressive schools as well as traditional ones, largely because educators as a group had not recognized the supplementary educational services they required for comparable academic achievement nor had many of them had the social vision that made academic achievement for all children a priority. When adjustment had been seen as the goal, it typically meant living easily within the constraints of society, a laudable goal for children of the affluent who could be expected to replicate their parents' circumstances but a much less laudable goal for the children of the poor who might not choose their parents' status quo for themselves and for whom education was the primary means of securing a destiny different from their friends and neighbors. Thus, for children of the poor the "adjustment" that progressive educators sought for their students through school interventions consigned these youngsters to inferior educations. Since minimal literacy was seen as necessary for all, children in primary or elementary schools generally fared better than did older youngsters where "adjustment" was more likely to be tied to curricula that determined career choices: college preparatory, home economics, or domestic science, industrial arts or shop, agricultural courses, secretarial programs. In high school, then, the effects of progressive education - or life adjustment - on children of the poor were often devastating.

Keppel sought to change this professional wisdom by calling for "equal educational opportunity." No one, including Keppel, knew exactly what that meant, and hence, it was salable politically, and no one had any idea at all how to implement it, which was also beneficial politically. Finally, the idea was much more popular with the politicians than with the educators, for the latter recognized that implementing this new notion would cause them to change their practices profoundly.

Two of the politicians, Wayne Morse and Robert F. Kennedy, both then members of the Senate, pushed Keppel to explain how the nation would know if Title I was having an effect. Keppel, recalling the rationale for the creation of the federal education office in 1867 (to provide information on the condition of education in the US), proposed a national testing program. This would be the first of its kind and would assess what American children knew in a variety of subject areas. Educators were aghast at such a notion, and Keppel trod very carefully among the potent antagonists to such a proposal. He believed that it would be both faster and more politically expedient for the intital work on the tests to be done with private funds, rather than with public moneys. He turned to the Carnegie Corporation of which his father, Frederick, had been president and of which he eventually became a trustee. Carnegie funded the planning of what became the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), but its operation, beginning in 1970 has been funded by the federal government, the National Center for Educational Statistics and the National Institute of Education.

In the beginning, results of NAEP were released only by region, not by state or locality, because of political opposition from educators who did not want their states or localities identified by specific scores of their students. Such was the level of concern about academic achievement of the educators in the late sixties and early seventies. By the time of Keppel's death in 1990 the political climate had so changed that more than half the states were now reporting their NAEP scores.

The effort to change both the ideology of adjustment and the practice of progressive education is the dominant theme of educational reform in the last third of the twentieth century. Keppel had the idea and the phrase, "equal educational opportunity," In short, he had the vision, but the American people have not yet had the will to transform that vision to a reality.

After a skirmish over desegregation of the public schools in Chicago with Superintendent Benjamin Willis and Mayor Richard Daley, Keppel left the Commissionership in early 1966. Keppel's successor as Commissioner, Harold Howe II, had the principal responsibility both for implementing the new Elementary and Secondary Education, whose passage Keppel had orchestrated, and for desegregating the schools. The Brown decision in 1954 had found separating the races in public schools by law inherently a violation of their constitutional rights, and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 had provided the federal government with the leverage to do something about it. With the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act the federal government for the first time could spend money in nearly every school district in the country. To be eligible for the money, however, the district must not have segregated schools or it would be in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Howe's dilemma was figuring out how to assure that the funds could be spent and the schools desegregated. The well-established separate housing patterns for blacks and whites in the north and the extensive formal legal and informal social structure the south requiring segregation made school desegregation extremely complicated.

Howe, appointed by President Lyndon Johnson, undertook these formidable tasks with zest. Grandson of the founder of the Hampton Institute and son of a Presbyterian minister, who was also head of Hampton Institute in the 1930s, Howe like Keppel did not come from the ranks of the education establishment. A graduate of the Taft School and Yale College, with a master's degree in history from Columbia, Howe, however, had substantial experience as a school teacher and school administrator before his federal appointment. Like Keppel he was playful with ideas. He wrote extensively, always dissociating himself from the world of educational researchers, but he wrote and spoke with clarity and charm that eluded most of the professional educators.

Howe needed all the charm he could muster to get the southern schools to begin desegregation. He never promised that test scores would rise for either blacks or whites as a result of the desegregation requirements. His argument was simply that federal money could not go to the districts until they could prove that they had desegregated and were not in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. How to achieve that necessary desegregation was a political question which he addressed with some of his able junior colleagues at the USOE, particularly Gregory Anrig, now head of the Educational Testing Service, which administers NAEP, and Stephen Joel Trachtenberg, now president of George Washington University.

Today the southern public schools are mostly desegregated, and today the scores on the NAEP of southern black students have risen significantly. Whether those scores have risen as a result of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, of the desegregation of the schools or for a myriad of other reasons is unknown. The argument, however, of the post-Brown era, beginning in 1954 was that access to institutions was important.

Keppel and Howe attempted to translate a judicial ruling and Congressional law into routines that would affect the lives of many, many American school children. Initially, the south proved more amenable to those changes than did the north, where housing, not laws, were the determining consideration. Gradually, however, housing in the south, as exemplified by Gary Orfield's recent work on Atlanta is proving as cumbersome as housing in the north. In the end, the changing residential and economic patterns in which poor, often minority, groups, are concentrated in sections of cities has proved devastating for the children living there. They grow up, as William Julius Wilson has documented, in circumstances in which the safest and most compassionate institution which they encounter is the urban school. Most people would not give urban schools high marks for either safety or compassion, but it is those children's tragedy that for many the urban school is the bulwark of their lives. That such a bulwark exists at all is an incredible testament to the dedication and devotion of the adults who both care and work there.[17]

Conclusion

The prior principal goals for the schools in this century -- assimilation, adjustment, and access -- all have elements of merit. The nation sought assimilation as a means of dealing with its large European immigrant population, and the schools provided it. Indeed, most newly American families did wish their children to learn the language and the ways of their new country, although many did not wish their own language and culture to be denigrated in the process as frequently occurred.

The emerging configuration of the increasingly industrial, urban, and well paid work force in the 1940s and 1950s encouraged adjustment as a goal so that men would learn good work habits and women would learn to be happy as housewives. Parents also sought healthy psychological, mental, social and economic adjustment for their children, although not at the expense of other qualities, such as creativity, independence or curiosity, that might not be fostered by schools' commitments to traditional forms of adjustment.

Finally, access to educational institutions without regard to race and access to needed compensatory educational services are goals no one in the society can seriously fault, particularly after the civil rights revolution of the 1960s. These aspirations, however, have proved extraordinarily difficult to translate from theory to practice, frustrating and angering both government and families. Thus, each of these societally-dictated goals for our schools in the twentieth century has merit. Complete fulfillment of each, however, has proved illusive.

Thus, the school continues to remind one of a battleship, changing course as society demands but never quite completing its journey before another new set of orders arrives sending it in another direction. "Hard right rudder," the captain shouts upon receipt of the newest coded message from Washington. With great creaking and dislocation of the movable items on board, the great ship shudders slowly into a new direction. So it is with the schools. Having tried to assimilate the European immigrant children, having attempted to help youngsters adjust to life, and having sought to provide access by complying with desegregation orders and programs of compensatory education, school leaders now find themselves ordered to attain world class academic standards by the year 2000 with all their children. They must try and they will, but they also need help. The battleship, the school, cannot do this alone. The rest of the educational flotilla must assist: families, communities, government, higher education, and the business community. Only then will all our children be able to achieve which by birthright should be theirs: enthusiasm for and accomplishment in learning.

1.A fuller discussion of these issues can be found in Patricia Albjerg Graham, S.O.S.: Sustain Our Schools (New York, 1992), Chapter 1.

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3.U.S. Bureau of the Census, Historical Statistics of the United States: Colonial Times to 1970 (White Plains, 1989), 379; U.S. National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics, 184.

4."High Schools, By the Numbers," Chicago Tribune (November 15, 1991), sect. 2, 4.

5.Diego Ribadeneira, "Disparities Between Rich, Poor Systems Often Glaring," Boston Globe (January 25, 1993), 16.

6.Benjamin Rush, "Thoughts Upon the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic," (Philadelphia, 1786) in Frederick Rudolph, ed., Essays on Education in the Early Republic (Cambridge, 1965), 14.

7.City of New York Department of Education, Sixth Annual Report of the City Superintendent of Schools (New York, 1904), 47; Leonard P. Ayres, Laggards in Our Schools (New York, 1909), 14.

8.David B. Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot, Managers of Virtue: Public School Leadership in America, 1920-1980 (New York, 1982).

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10.National Education Association, Report of the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, U.S. Bureau of Education Bulletin No. 35 (Washington, D.C., 1918), in Marvin Lazerson, ed., American Education in the Twentieth Century: A Documentary History, Classics in Education No. 52 (New York, 1987), 79-87. Quotes are from p. 80.

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12.John Dewey, Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education (New York, 1916).

13.Frederick Lovatt Redefer, executive secretary of the Progressive Education Association, appeared on the cover of the October 31, 1938, issue of Time. The cover story, "Progressives' Progress," is on pages 31-35. Wilford M. Aiken, Thirty Schools Tell Their Story (New York, 1943).

14.The preceeding three paragraphs draw heavily upon my article "What America Has Expected of its Schools" to be published in American Journal of Education (February, 1993).

15.Commission on Life Adjustment Education for Youth, Vitalizing Secondary Education: Report of the First Commission on Life Adjustment Education for Youth, in U.S. Office of Education, Bulletin (Washington, D.C., 1951), bulletin no. 3, 32.

16.U.S. Office of Education, Life Adjustment Education for Every Youth (1947), in U.S. Office of Education, Bulletin (Washington, D.C., 1951), bulletin no. 22, 16.

17.Gary Orfield and Carole Ashkinaze, The Closing Door: Conservative Policy and Black Opportunity (Chicago, 1991); William Julius Wilson, The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy (Chicago, 1987).

CHAPTER 2

RECENT HISTORY OF U.S. GOVERNANCE

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RECENT HISTORY OF U.S. EDUCATION GOVERNANCE*

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This paper provides an overview of U.S. education governance reform with the major changes since the turn of the century. There were two major eras of change, 1900-1920 and 1965-1985. Perhaps the 1990's will encompass yet another big change through nationalizing influences on curriculum, exams, and teacher certification. These epochs have fundamentally transformed education governance, but not always in the ways intended by their proponents. The linkage between theories of governance reform impact, and what actually occurs is not precise or reliable. The history of governance changes is filled with unexpected effects and a gradual increase in fragmentation and complexity.

Some of these historical shifts in governance were caused by structural changes such as different election districts for school boards. But others were caused by changes in the influences of particular policy actors and their level of governance involvement. States have always had a role in U.S. education governance, but aggressive Governors, legislators, and courts have transformed the state role between 1950 and 1992. Governance changes, however, reflect major alterations in the socio-economic environment. Sputnik, Civil Rights, and international economic competition are three recent galvanizing events. The crucial structural reforms of 1900-1920 in large part reflected increased immigration.

Large scale changes in education governance have been at the expense of local discretion, particularly for local school boards and administrators. An overall chart of changes is presented below.

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Figure 1

Trends in Educational Governance -- 1950-1987

- + Federal
- + State
- + Courts
- + Interstate networks and organizations (school finance reform, teacher standards boards, tax limits)
- + Private business, ETS, CED, and so on

- - School board
- - Local superintendent
- - Local central administration

- + Teacher collective bargaining
- + Administrators bargaining
- + Community-based interest groups (nonprofessionals)

+ increasing influence
- decreasing influence

"Institutional choice" provides a partial framework for this paper (Clune, 1987). Often educational policy debates focus more on what should be done rather than on which institutions should be authorized to make and implement policy. One of the crucial policy decisions is the choice of a decision maker that in turn changes the balance of education governance. For example, courts have been reluctant to delegate civil rights protection to local school districts in Mississippi. Another type of institutional choice is whether to place various functions in the hands of markets (e.g., vouchers) or politics (e.g., school board elections). The 1983-89 state reform movement included an institutional choice to enhance the curricular and testing role of state government at the expense of local control.

Clune stresses that two general characteristics of available institutions are important: agreement on substantive goals and capacity to achieve those goals. Substantive goals are crucial because of the need to insure support for a policy. Courts may be more enthusiastic about civil rights goals than school boards. But support must be buttressed by institutional capacity. For example, courts cannot run school districts on a weekly basis. A method of choosing institutions can be called "comparative institutional advantage" which begins with distrust or criticism of a particular institution.

> Since no decision maker is perfect, the distrust directed at one decision maker must be carefully weighted against the advantages of that decision maker and both the advantages and disadvantages of alternative decision makers. In other words, although the logic of institutional choice typically begins with distrust, distrust itself proves nothing in the absence of a superior alternative... The logic of comparative institutional advantage also implies the futility of seeking perfect or ideal implementation of a policy.... The real world offers a "least worst choice" of imperfect institutions...(Clune, 1987, pp. 4-5)

A problem with institutional choice analyses is the tendency to confuse predictive with normative applications. In education, policy connections between new institutional choices and education are often unclear. For instance, how much state control of curriculum will lead to how much decline in teacher autonomy? How does parent control of school choice through vouchers lead to increased learning? The rate of substitution is equally unclear, for example, in terms of at what point increased federal influence in education leads to a decline in the state role. It is possible to avoid zero-sum properties through various win-win scenarios such as state curriculum content guidelines that help teachers communicate higher order thinking, and do not interfere with local teacher professionalism or autonomy. In sum, institutional choice is complex, uncertain, and subject to continual political change. The accumulation of policies over many years embodies a set of preferences about which institutions should govern what components of a policy area. For example, states have increased drastically their control of school finance from 1960 to 1990.

Although most nations have established school systems based on national or state control, the U.S. has always emphasized local control based predominantly on small districts. In 1948, the U.S. had 89,000 school districts and now has 15,020. Moreover, unlike most countries, U.S. school governance is detached from general government that provides other services for children. Governance changes over the years have challenged these original institutional choices concerning who should govern U.S. schools.

As this history will demonstrate, reform of educational governance that results in different educational choices is often motivated by desires to change school priorities and policies (Tyack, 1974). Replacing those in power with those who are out of power is one way to attempt policy changes. Moreover, directly changing the objectives of schools may be more difficult politically than indirectly changing local school policies by "reforming" governance. Institutional choice becomes another policy instrument to temporarily settle the debates among the numerous and conflicting goals that the public has for education. For example, reformers at the turn of the 20th century wanted a unitary curriculum across cities and an end to bilingual education in German, Polish, and other languages. The 1983 Report on A Nation At Risk implied that local control of curriculum standards was not optimal and therefore, state government should assume more control of local curricular policies (U.S. Department of Education, 1983)

Institutional choice can also be designed to further the interests of either majorities or minorities. In the 1955-1975 era the U.S. Supreme Court became more influential and created local court monitors with powers to override local school boards. These monitors were supposed to protect the rights of minorities such as blacks and handicapped children (Wirt and Kirst, 1992).

Recent critics of educational governance allege that democratic government is inappropriate and dysfunctional for schools. These critics want to change institutional choice to the market through vouchers and choice (Chubb and Moe, 1990). Typically, changes in institutional choice result both from disagreement about goals, as well as widespread dissatisfaction and loss of confidence in the quality of educational outcomes.

For example, New Jersey declared some of its school districts educationally bankrupt in the 1980's and seized control from the local school boards. The history of shifting patterns of influence presented below are caused in part by different preferences for institutional choice. But increases and decreases in influence are also unintended products of other policies. For example, California Proposition 13 cut local property taxes and unintentionally, according to voter surveys, shifted control of educational policy to Sacramento.

Because of the nature of U.S. federalism there are many contenders for new institutional choices that will shift the balance of governance influence. Chart I is one way to portray the overall governance matrix. Note the important influence of private organizations such as textbook publishers, foundations, and testing agencies (Lageman, 1989).

Chart I here

As this historical review will demonstrate, trends since 1960 have shifted governance upward toward non-local levels. The biggest political losers have been local school boards and superintendents. The biggest winners have been states and unions. The consolidation of school districts from over 130,000 to about 15,000 resulted in fewer options for consumers and enhances demands for more choice. Is this the right balance for governing education? These are value judgements that U.S. systems must make. It is easier for many political organizations with special causes to utilize higher levels of government to

Chart I

Influences on Curriculum Policy Making

	National	State	Local
General Legislative	Congress	State Legislature	(City Councils have n influence)
Educational Legislative	House Committee on Education and Labor	State school board	Local school board
Executive	President	Governor	(Mayor has no influen
Administrative	U.S. Department of Education	State Department	School Superintendent
Bureaucratic	National Science Foundation (Divison of Curriculum Improvement)	State Department (Division of Instruction)	Department chairmen, Teachers
Professional Association	National testing agencies (ETS or ACT)	Accrediting associations	County Association of Superintendents
Other Private Interests	Foundations and business corporations	State Teachers Association	NAACP, National Organization for Wome

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tell the local level what to do. Unions prefer school system contracts rather than negotiating at every building. But the 30 year trend toward centralization and bureaucracy is leading to radical demands for decentralizing changes in governance including vouchers and charter schools.

The Historic Dominance of Local Control

Local control is the hallmark of American education, so this history begins there and moves from the local level to states, and finally to the federal level. Indeed, the federal level was the least important actor in the history of school governance, and did not play a major reform role until 1957 with NDEA. Local taxes carried the bulk of finance support with over an 83 percent share in 1930. Consequently, state government focused on minimum standards for rural schools and the federal presence was barely visible (Iannaccone and Cistone, 1974).

The concept of the local board originated in New England, where citizens at first controlled the schools directly through town meetings. By 1826, however, Massachusetts already had created a separate school committee divorced from the rest of local government, and the Massachusetts model spread throughout the nation. Horace Mann, a founder of the American school system, proclaimed that "the common school was to be free, financed by local and state government, controlled by lay boards of education, and mixing all social groups under one roof" (Kirst, 1991). The school board was to be nonpartisan and nonsectarian.

In the 1800s, schools were controlled by hundreds of thousands of local board members. As late as 1890, 71 percent of Americans lived in rural areas, where the one-room school was typical (Tyack, 1974). By the turn of the 20th century, however, as society moved into the modern era, big changes were in store for school boards.

Research evidence supports a view that teachers and administrators in the 20th century were gradually socialized into a political orientation featuring the following norms: education is a unique function that must have its own separate and politically independent governance structure. The operation of the schools should be uninvolved in "politics" and professional unity of teachers and administrators should be observed in political action (Hess and Kirst, 1971). Overt involvement in political conflict is to be avoided; alignment with political parties was undesirable; and collective action in electoral campaigns and pressuring of public officials was not appropriate professional conduct. Supporting this viewpoint, which Iannacone calls "the politics preferred by pedagogues," were the values of professionalism, efficiency, and bureaucracy combined with a fear of community sanctions for many types of overt political action (Iannaccone, 1967).

Data on political behavior demonstrates that these political orientations in fact restricted the political activities of teachers and administrators (Hess and Kirst, 1971). In effect, political attitudes and behavior were consistent (Sayre, 1965).

Turn of the Century Reform

A pressing public education issue during 1890-1910 concerned the role of the alleged unscrupulous party politician (Tyack, 1969). It was not uncommon in large cities for teachers to use political influence to get positions and, sometimes, later to be fired when their political patron lost an election. Frequently, board of education members were supported by major parties and elected on a decentralized ward basis. For instance, Pittsburgh had 222 members of local boards and Boston had 30 subcommittees with a total membership of 142 elected on a political ward basis (Tyack, 1974). The Board of Education was often used as a political stepping stone and, consequently, party nominations for school board were hotly contested. In order to gain control of the situation, reformers wanted to divorce policy making and management from the politician through centralization under a professional superintendent. This implied a divorce of school management from other municipal services that would always be controlled to a significant extent by politicians. Moreover, teachers wanted an end to the spoils system in determining their careers.

Urban school reform was part of a broader pattern of social elites galvanizing municipal change at the turn of the century (Hays, 1963). Although the surface rhetoric pitted the corrupt politician against the community-oriented citizen, the reformers underlying motives have been questioned by several historians. It resulted in a professional culture that tends to be less diverse than the cultures represented in the ward boards. For instance, Hays has emphasized that the financial and professional leaders deplored the decentralized ward system in large part because it empowered members of the lower and lower middle class (many of whom were recent immigrants). Reformers wanted "not simply to replace bad men with good; they proposed to change the occupational and class origins of decision makers" (Counts, 1927). Tyack expresses this viewpoint in stronger language:

> Underlying much of the reform movement was an elitist assumption that prosperous native born Protestant Anglo-Saxons were superior to other groups and thus should determine the curriculum and the allocation of jobs. It was the mission of the schools to imbue children of the immigrants and the poor with uniformly WASP ideals (Tyack, 1974, p. 35).

Here we see clearly the use of changes in institutional choices as a way to change policy. The watchwords of the reform movement in the city schools became centralization, expertise, professionalization, non-political control, and efficiency. The most attractive models of organization for education were large-scale industrial bureaucracies rapidly emerging in the 1880-1910 age of consolidation (Tyack, 1974).

The reformers contended that the board members elected by wards advanced parochial and special interests at the expense of the needs of the school district as a whole. What was needed to counter this atomization of interest was election at large. Professional expertise rested upon the assumption that scientific ways to administer schools existed and were independent of the particular values of particular groups. A good school system is good for everyone, not just a part of the community. This unitary-community idea would help protect the schools from the local political party influences and interest groups (Salisbury, 1967). By 1970, social and ethnic minorities realized that they needed to elect local board members by sub-district in order to elect some of their group.

The 1900-1920 reformers charged, moreover, that, since the larger school boards worked through numerous subcommittees, their executive authority was splintered. No topic was too trivial for a separate subcommittee, ranging from ways of teaching reading to the purchase of doorknobs. At one time, Chicago had 79 subcommittees and Cincinnati 74 (Tyack, 1974). The primary prerequisite for better management was thought to be centralization of power in a chief executive who had considerable delegated authority from the board. Only under such a system would someone make large-scale improvements and be held accountable.

It was sometimes a very small group of patricians who secured new charters from state legislatures and thereby reorganized the urban schools without a popular vote in the cities (Tyack, 1974). This turn of the century school reform was implemented by a policy issue network composed of big business, university leaders, and municipal reformers that later created concepts like the city manager (Tyack, 1974).

Counts's classic study in 1927 demonstrated that it was the upper-class professionals and business people who made up the centralized boards of education (Counts, 1927). For instance, in St. Louis after the centralization reforms in 1897, professional men on the board had jumped from 4.8 percent to 58.3 percent, big businessmen from 9.0 percent to 25 percent; small businessmen dropped from 47.6 percent to 16.7 percent and wage-earning employees from 28.6 percent to none (10 percent were of unknown earlier occupation). These board members in turn delegated much of their formal powers to certified school professionals who had the flexibility to shape the schools to the needs of industrial society.

The "above-politics" doctrine of public education demonstrated impressive popularity and longevity among the general public. But there are advantages for education in the maintenance of this folklore, including the view that education was different from other local government functions, and run by professionals rather than politicians (Browder, 1970).

The realignment in influence further enhanced what Callahan called the "cult of efficiency" in school operation (Callahan, 1962). This "cult" played down the desirability of political influence, conflict, or pressure groups and favored scientific management. Leading academicians, for example, concentrated on researching a specific set of tools for the administrative activities of school management and created a merit system bureaucracy based on university certificates.

School administrators and teachers became successful in attaining their reform goal of "boundary maintenance," or freedom from most external political constraints to a greater degree than most other public programs. Prominent characteristics of educational governance became political isolation from partisan politics and other local government institutions, tight organizational boundaries, and a slow rate of internal change that exemplifies social systems generally defined as "closed systems" (Iannaccone, 1967). This closed system operated within a value system of leadership from politically neutral competence through certified professional administrators. In order to keep political parties out of school policy making, school elections remained unaligned with political parties and ballots were non-partisian. Moreover, board members were elected at large as "trustees" rather than from subdistricts as "representatives."

The political attitudes of teachers reflected the political operation of the schools. Harmon Ziegler's study of the Oregon Education Association in the mid-sixties (Ziegler, 1966) concluded:

> There is a fairly strong feeling among teachers that being a member of a profession (which teachers strive so desperately to achieve) makes it necessary to develop an organization which is 'above politics.' There is some belief that the professional stature of the teacher will suffer if the professional organization gets involved in the rough and tumble world of politics, especially electoral politics.

A 1957 national survey of teacher attitudes of practice and opinion on seven types of civic-political attitudes supplies support for Ziegler's assertion. A large majority of teachers thought teachers should not persuade others to vote for teachers' candidates in school board elections, serve as party precinct workers, conduct partisan elections, or give speeches for teachers' candidates outside of school (NEA, 1957).

Roscoe C. Martin's 1962 survey of suburban schools and Robert Salisbury's analysis of city districts stress the political values, attitudes, and norms of school administrators with regard to the issues highlighted in this paper paralleled to those of teachers (Salisbury, 1967). Martin's conclusions concerning the school political environment were:

> Thus, is the circle closed and the paradox completed. Thus, does the public school heralded by its champions as the cornerstone or democracy, reject the political world in which democratic institutions operate. Thus is historical identification with local government accompanied by insistence on complete independence of any agency ... of local govenment, lip service to general citizen activity attended by mortal fear of general politics, the logical and legitimate companion of citizen action (Martin, 1962, p. 89).

Evolution of School Board Role

After the turn of the 20th century reforms, board influence was restricted by a lack of time and independent staff. Board members usually held demanding full-time jobs and could meet at night only once or twice a month. They rarely received objective criteria by which to question the professional judgments of the superintendent and his staff. Moreover, elections seldom provided board members with a specific mandate or policy platform (Kirst, 1991).

Before the mid-1960s, a description of the board's function would be something like this: School boards most often mediated major policy conflicts, leaving the determination of important policy issues to the professional staff. Even in mediating, they might do little. In the process, they often simply legitimized the proposals of the professional staff, making only marginal changes (Boyd, 1976).

Although board members spent the bulk of their time on details, they did establish a policy "zone of consent" that made clear to the superintendent what was, and what was not, acceptable (Boyd, 1976). For example, a superintendent who tried in 1950 to introduce bilingual education in a rural, conservative California district would discover that this program was outside the board's zone of consent.

Not surprisingly, smaller districts with little population growth and a narrow spectrum of values and philosophies created more citizen satisfaction than did the larger units. Larger, more diverse districts often featured conflict between the locals, who had lived in the district for many years, and better educated parents who moved into suburbs far from the central city (Boyd, 1976).

The centralization that occurred in city school boards did not much change rural boards. Rural boards, however, were greatly affected by a rapid school consolidation process that created larger schools with the capacity to offer a wide range of curriculum options. What was once an archipelago of districts in America--with each island having a board and community in harmony--was fused into a system of larger, more varied districts. The 89,000 districts of 1948 became 55,000 five years later, 31,000 by 1961, and 15,020 by 1991 (Wirt and Kirst, 1992). During the 1970s, on any given day, three districts disappeared forever between breakfast and dinner. Earlier, in the 1960s, that many had evaporated between breakfast and the morning coffee break, with another seven gone by dinner.

Educators, who believed bigger must be better, found that these larger districts offered more options but also created more conflicting viewpoints about school policy. And, while districts grew larger, boards grew smaller: There were fewer board members available to handle complex issues and represent a diverse citizenry. In the 1930s, a typical school board member represented approximately 200 people; by 1970, he represented 3,000 constituents.

A nationwide study of school boards in the early 1970's concluded:

> ...We can say that the recruitment process implies that the potential resources of boards--representative capacity and legal authority--are underutilized. It is not surprising that school boards are WASPish; what does bear directly upon resource utilization is the low-keyed, self-perpetuating selection process which minimizes conflict. Such a selection process subverts the notions of lay control and hence the 'public' orientation of board members. Orthodoxy and tradition are cherished; controversy is not. There is little intensive lay, or group, involvement in elections. Thus boards emerge as relatively impermeable.
>
> The early education reformers have succeeded too well; politics (i.e., partisan) and education are normally separate. Thus, the superintendent's basic resources--technical skills, information skills, information monoply, expertise--are not matched by an equally resourceful board. As we continue to describe the decisional culture of school systems, the lack of a balance of power between board and superintendent will become apparent (Ziegler and Jennings, 1974, p.33).

Moreover, the composition of school boards did not keep pace with the changing racial and ethnic constituency. A 1989 survey conducted by Emily Feistritzer at the National Center for Education Information in Washington, D.C., revealed that school board presidents were 97 percent white, 71 percent male, in their late 40s, and had children at home. They have more education, make more money, and are more conservative politically than the average American (Feistritzer, 1989).

Since the 1930s, the major change in the composition of school boards as a whole has been the dramatic increase in female members from 12 percent in 1930 to 33 percent in 1991 (Wirt and Kirst, 1992). A national study of the roles of male and female school board members found women were more involved in curricular and other educational program issues than men; women also were less likely to delegate decisions to the superintendent. Males focused more on fiscal, contract, and management issues (Feistritzer, 1989).

For superintendents, expertise has become not only a resource but a way of life learned early and essential for occupational survival. Lacking staff, information, and linkages to the community, school boards found themselves reacting to a superintendent's agenda that highlights expertise and routine as much as possible. But the board does select and fire the superintendent, so it may not need to restate its policy orientation for every issue (Boyd, 1974).

What groups did school boards hear from during the reform era 1920-1965 (Ziegler and Jennings, 1971). The results of several surveys show that the most active voice was the PTA. Almost two-thirds of the board members in the Jennings and Ziegler study of 1968 cited the PTA, followed by one-third of the members who mentioned contact with teacher groups. After that, contact drops off rapidly: civil rights groups (20%), business groups (13%), right-wing groups (13%), and labor organizations (3%). In short, in-house and supportive groups (the PTA and teachers) had the most intense interaction with board members by a large margin. Two-thirds of the board members and three-fourths of the superintendents did not think the board's role should be that of a representative of the public desires -- instead they stressed the trustee role.

Teachers and Collective Political Action: The Impact of Earlier Reforms

As recently as 1970, teachers were reluctant to use collective action to enhance their political influence both within and outside of the schools.

Local school administrators preferred to deal with individual teachers, not teachers as they are collectively organized today. Indeed, a 1961 survey of the doctrines of educational administration discovered little attention to formal, organized groups of teachers (Rosenthal, 1969). NEA, the dominant national organization of teachers, paid scant attention to the local scene and concentrated its efforts on research and national legislation. The tenets of educational administration stressed group activity, and unions would lead to unnecessary and harmful conflict among educators who needed to stay united (Rosenthal, 1969). The schools stressed the harmony of interests and agreements on goals that existed among all types of professionals, including teachers and administrators. Moreover, school administrators anticipated correctly that once employee organizations became viable political interest groups, teacher leadership would have a survival instinct to seek out and maintain conflict over issues in school governance (Rosenthal, 1969). Even a September 1965 NEA national survey found only 22 percent of the teachers favored collective bargaining (NEA, 1965).

This internal stance on collective organization was mirrored in teacher and administrator conduct in local, state, and national elections. In 1961, teachers and administrator organizations had not accepted the political necessity of giving money or endorsements to candidates (Ziegler, 1966). Ziegler found the membership of the Oregon Education Association was far more supportive of "defensive" activities (if teachers were attacked by the community) than they are of "offensive" political activities. Electoral activities were considered much more unprofessional than legislative lobbying--but lobbying is not very effective if the incumbents do not support the teachers' viewpoint (Ziegler, 1966). Formal alliances with political parties were not considered seriously by professional educational organizations.

Political action among teachers involved sharp differences between the majority of female teachers (69% in 1960) and the minority of men (31% in 1960). A 1960 survey sampling all teachers revealed that 60 percent of the males favored campaign work by teachers in national elections but only 46.5 percent of the women did (NEA, 1968).

In sum, the political behavior of teachers and administrators in 1960-61 is characterized by non-partisanship, a reluctance to engage in public conflict, and a minimal use of collective political action and bargaining. This supported a governance system dominated by administrators with poorly organized interest groups. In rural areas, however, the school board could be a transmitter of community demands without the need for organized groups. Rural board members encountered citizens in many informal settings like shopping centers and clubs.

The Impact of Collective Bargaining

The late 1960's began an intense period of implementing collective bargaining based on the industrial union model. Between 1965 and 1980, in most states except those in the Southeast and Mountain regions, teachers realized that they needed collective bargaining. This was a major movement away from administrative dominance of governance.

The outcome of collective bargaining is a written and time-bound agreement covering wages, hours, and conditions of employment. As well as involving the specifics of the contract, major disputes can occur over the scope of bargaining and grievance procedures. The negotiated contract, however, is not felt by teachers until it is implemented in the work setting. At the school site, the board's contract language must be interpreted to apply to specific circumstances. This means that the site principal, teachers, and union building representative must become very familiar with the contract's term. Yet even familiarity does not forestall many disputes about specific teaching arrangements. These disputes can lead to grievances whose settlement can clarify the contract.

Thus, teacher influence varies by district and site. Teachers at school sites sometimes permit exceptions to the district contract if they believe specific school conditions warrant them. Teacher unions have the most difficulty enforcing such contract provisions as pupil discipline, building maintenance, and security because grievance procedures are less effective. On the other hand, seniority and teacher transfer clauses are the most commonly implemented. The unions' long-run effectiveness, however, may come more from influencing decisions at state and federal levels that then percolate down to the local school system. As close students of this subject point out, there was a significant impact on traditional school governance through teacher lobbying in state capitals (Guthrie & Craig, 1973). Teachers were able to pass state legislation that regulated school policy in areas where they could not obtain contract provisions. The NEA has a much stronger presence at the state level because the AFT has primarily big-city members.

What happens to administrator authority, particularly among principals, when contracts filter down through the loosely coupled school system? A major study found that while some provisions tightly limit the principal's freedom of action, others get redefined to fit the particular requirements at the school site level. That is, "such factors as teacher interests, educational consequences, administrative leadership and staff allegiance were balanced and counterbalanced (Johnson, pp. 162-3). How the principal works with the contract also affects teachers' respect for administrators. In short, having standards and expecting much of teachers earns principals a tolerance and even respect from teachers in interpreting the contract; for teachers, a good school is more important than union membership, close observance of a contract, or running the schools. This is because, as one administrator observed, "Teachers like to be part of a winning team" (Johnson, p. 163).

The ultimate effect of collective bargaining may not be as great was once thought. Johnson stresses that the effects of collective bargaining are deep and pervasive but not so extreme nor uniform as critics often suggest.

> Collective bargaining has not been shown to have increased teachers' commitment to their work or enhanced their standing as professionals, but neither has it destroyed the schools. Caricatures of straitjacketed principals, Kafkaesque school bureaucracies, or schools under seige by militant teachers scarcely represent the experiences of these sample districts. Overall, the organizational effects of collective bargaining appear to be both moderate and manageable.

> This is not to suggest, though, that labor relations practices look the same in all districts of all schools. In fact, negotiations, contract language, and administrative practices are remarkably diverse (Johnson, pp. 164-65).

Understanding these consequences is confused by the diverse practices that have emerged in local systems. No single factor accounts for this diversity in local practices, but certain important variables included the history of local labor practices, the local political culture, and--most important--the people at the center of negotiations and contract management. In California, the same districts have strikes or acrimonious labor disputes near the expiration of every contract. Some of this is caused by personalities, styles, and relationships, and some is caused by a long and bitter history of labor-management relations. However, in other districts, both sides prefer cooperation over a long period of time. No simple predictive model can account for these factors.

But it is clear that collective bargaining has increased the complexity of the principal's job because he or she cannot apply the contract in a routine and standard manner. Moreover, there are some overall impacts of bargaining including:

> ...the movement of the locus of decision making to central offices within school systems and to locations outside of school systems, including legislatures, courts, and public administrative agencies that govern collective bargaining procedures (Cresswell and Murphy,1980, p.201).

Increasingly, local educators work within a power-sharing context where educational leadership is still possible, but surrounded by more complex requirements.

Proposals in the 1970's to Overturn the Turn of the Century Reform

As an antidote to the lack of political participation and the dominance of the professional priesthood, several scholars advocated injecting more politics into educational governance. This movement supplemented collective bargaining in its assault on the predominant governance influence of local administrators.

Herbert Kaufman posited three competing governance values or objectives: representativeness; technical, nonpartisan competence; and leadership (Kaufman, 1963). The first objective refers to the election of public officials, the use of referenda, and the preferred effectiveness of the legislative branch in determining education policy. The second refers to the demand for officials to be trained and qualified for their jobs and a preference for education decisions based on technical and professional considerations rather than on partisan political premises. The third refers to executive coordination through some central mechanism that insures reasonably consistent and efficient education programs.

The 1970's educational politics literature advocated a higher emphasis on governance structures and processes for representation (Mosher and Wagoner, 1978). A reorientation of priorities from the turn-of-the-century reforms of centralization, depoliticization, expertise, and civil service competence would be a first step toward this goal. The new priorities would be increased representation, the school as the unit of governance, decentralization, and lay control. The value conflict inherent in education would be highlighted, not obscured behind a facade of professional expertise. Some writers wanted a dismantling of the 1900-1920 reforms through:

Board elections by subcommunity districts rather than at large;

All members of a school board running at once; and

Optional use of partisan endorsements (Kirst, 1976).

School board effectiveness would be enhanced by its own independent staff. In large districts, decentralization and community control would accompany the above measure. School board members would receive salaries in large districts and be expected to surrender part of their outside activities. These central school board members would be buttressed by elected citizen/staff advisory councils (including community members) for each school.

This type of governance plan recognizes that it is the school, rather than the entire district, which is the critical nexus between the child and the substance of education (Guthrie, 1986). The school site is also large enough to have relevance for state aid formulas. We need to know whether money for special federal and state programs is reaching the schools with the most needy pupils. Moreover, we need to know whether these needy schools are receiving an equitable share of the local district's budget for "regular" programs. Even in small school districts, it is the school site that is the biggest concern to the parents. Even if community participation is not high at all school sites, this plan might have beneficial effects. In addition to what is done in government, the issue of how things are done and how people feel about their governance is crucial.

The 1970's reformers contended that the U.S. should rethink the reformer's assumption that the community is a unity for educational policy and that, consequently, there should be a uniform educational program in all schools (Levin, 1969). With safeguards to prevent racial and economic segregation, this school site emphasis can be linked to the concept of parent-choice clusters. Schools in the same geographical area could feature quite different programmatic approaches -- open classrooms, self-contained classrooms, schools without walls, etc. -- and parents could choose their preferred approach. All alternatives could be within the public sector to avoid the difficulties of an unregulated voucher scheme. A plan with choices would provide greater leverage over school policy by parents.

There was some movement based on the advocacy for governance reforms in the 1970's. By 1991 more than half of urban school boards were elected by subdistricts, (National School Boards Association, 1992) and school site decision making was a major component of the restructuring rhetoric (David, 1989).

THE MARKET ALTERNATIVE TO POLITICAL GOVERNANCE

The main 1980's intellectual challenge to the pattern of institutional choice has been advanced by market theorists. This is exemplified by Chubb and Moe's, Politics, Markets, and America's Schools, (1990).

One of their major points is that the

> ...System's familiar arrangements for direct democratic control do indeed impose a distinctive structure on the educational choices of all the various participants...and that this structure tends to promote organizational characteristics that are ill-suited to the effective performance of American public schools. This social outcome is the product of countless individual decisions, but it is not an outcome that any of the major players would want or intend if acting along. It is truly a product of the system as a whole, an unintended consequence of the way the system works. (p. 14)

In short, the political web surrounding U.S. schools is so complex, fragmented, inclusive, and incoherent that it drastically restricts school site autonomy and school effectiveness. Chubb and Moe use the High School and Beyond data to imply that school autonomy is a crucial determinant of pupil achievement. Consequently, they recommend drastic changes in the institutional structure of schools, including federal, state, and central office deregulation, plus scholarships for each student who can choose any deregulated school (public or private) that meets very minimal standard.

If we believe Chubb and Moe, the major politics of education "problem" has changed 180 degrees in the last forty years. In the 1960's the consensus was that education suffered from too little politics--education was a relatively closed political system controlled by professional educators with an underdeveloped interest group structure. School support groups like the PTA dominated and the superintendent and principals were "in charge" (Martin, 1962). There was a need for more interest groups, higher election turnouts, and more candidates for school board elections. In the mid 1960's, the state level was viewed as a minor player oriented to serving rural schools. This view culminated when two political scientists (Ziegler and Jennings) published Governing American Schools in 1974, based on a nationwide survey. They criticized the schools for a low level of "representative democracy" with particular emphasis on school boards.

> It is patent that, when measured against the yardstick of a classic democratic theory of leadership selection, school district governance hardly comes through with flying colors. There are, indeed, certain board prerequisites which might well be considered discriminatory. Competition is limited, sponsorship and preemptive appointments common. Challenges to the status quo are infrequent; incumbents are but rarely challenged and more rarely still defeated. There are often no issue differences at all in an election...Communication is sparse, often one-sided in either the supportive or nonsupportive mode, and ad hoc. For its part the board feels threatened when any but harmless group activity flourishes because that has come to mean that all is not well in the district, that the natives are restless. (p.76)

Ziegler and Jennings (1974) went on to extoll the "salutary effects of politics." They argued that the apolitical stance of the 1900-1920 school governance reformers created an institution with an ethos that was "above politics." They called for proposals to provide more representative democracy and "large doses of politics."

Well, 16 years later, along come Chubb and Moe claiming that the political doses and numbers of fragmented organized interests are too large, and have caused political gridlock. Has the political web of U.S. schools changed so much in 16 years or is the data base faulty? Chubb and Moe claim that the large and stultifying bureaucracy merely reflects numerous political winners who have enshrined their gains in incoherent school policies and structural homeostasis. They do not address the numerous small LEAs below 500 or 1,000 pupils where bureaucracy is minimal. They argue that, "Under a system of democratic control, the public schools are governed by an enormous, far-flung constituency in which the interests of parents and students carry no special status or weight. When markets prevail, parents and students are thrust onto center stage, along with the owners and staff of schools; most of the rest of society plays a distinctly secondary role, limited for the most part to setting the framework within which educational choices are made."

Unlike Jennings and Ziegler, Chubb and Moe use secondary sources, including Schools in Conflict by Wirt and Kirst (1989) to substantiate their claims. School administrators may build rolling coalitions of different interests to obtain their goals. But Chubb and Moe believe these coalitions can make only minor changes and do not represent parents and students. The politics of gridlock are overwhelming change, and rolling coalitions can only make very marginal policy changes.

EVOLUTION OF THE STATE ROLE

Under the U.S. Constitution, education is a power reserved for the states and the basis for state control over education was well established as early as 1820 by constitutional and statutory provisions. Most state constitutions contain language that charges the legislature with the responsibility for establishing and maintaining a system of free public schools. The operation of most schools is delegated by the state to local school boards.

Historically, the states have controlled local education through several means (Van Geel, 1976). The state may, for example, establish minimums of curriculum, teacher qualifications, and facilities below which local school operations cannot fall. States may encourage local schools to exceed minimums and often share some of the costs if local districts provide higher salaries or extend the school year. Most states have specified or encouraged reorganization of school districts. In the 1940's, states began to require consolidation of school districts and eliminated so many that where there were nine school districts in 1932, only one existed in 1978. The total number decreased from 128,000 to 16,000.

States have required local provision of services, such as education for the handicapped. Indeed, a major argument for state control is that it can ensure equality and standardization of instruction and resources (Wirt, 1977). Local control advocates, however, assert that local flexibility is desirable because the technology of education is so unclear. In essence, the argument over local control focuses on the trade-off between two values--equal (and adequate) treatment and freedom of choice. Moreover, the influence of laymen is more likely to be enhanced by the availability of local discretion for decentralized governance units like school boards. State centralists argue, however, that state minimums do not restrict local discretion. Over time, such requirements are transformed into a low level of school services, which is exceeded substantially by districts either with greater wealth in taxable property or with a greater willingness to levy taxes, or both.

In sum, equality, efficiency, and choice are three state policy values that often compete (Garms, Guthrie, and Pierce, 1988). The first two have been growing in public acceptance, and the state role has increased. Local options, on the other hand, have been curtailed over the past 40 years.

Variations in State Control

States differ markedly with respect to historical patterns of control over objects of governance such as curriculum, personnel administration, and finances, depending on whether the state follows "centrist" or a "localist" policy. In New England the local schools enjoy an autonomy from state controls that may have its roots in resentment against centralized authorities such as the colonial English governor. By contrast, textbooks and courses of instruction in the southern states are often centrally determined (Wirt, 1977).

State curriculum mandating has both historical and political causes. Often newer subjects, such as vocational education and driver training, have needed state laws in order to gain a secure place in the curriculum. These subjects were introducted into the curriculum after 1920 amid great controversy, whereas mathematics and English never required political power to justify their existence. Consequently, the standard subjects are less frequently mandated by state laws.

Lying behind the interstate variation in local control is a concept called "political culture," which refers to the differing value structures that manifest themselves in the characteristic behavior and actions of states and regions (Wirt, 1977). Political culture ranges widely in its objects--political rules, party structures, government structures and processes, citizens' roles, and attitudes about all these. In short, political culture is a constraint helping to account for major differences among states in local versus state control. It affects policy feasibility. It also helps to determine whether state control will expand and the inclinations of local officials to evade state influence.

The capacity of state education agencies (SEAs) to intercede in local school policy has also increased dramatically in the last twenty years. Ironically, the federal government provided the initial programmatic and fiscal impetus for this expansion. The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 and its subsequent amendments required state agencies to approve local projects for federal funds in diverse areas such as education for the disadvantaged, handicapped, bilingual, and migrant children, and innovation. In each of these federal programs, 1 percent of the funds were earmarked for state administration. Moreover, Title V of ESEA provided general support for state administrative resources, with some priority given to state planning and evaluation. By 1972, three-fourths of the SEA staffs had been in their jobs for less than three years (Wirt and Kirst, 1975). All the expansion in California from 1964 to 1970 was financed by federal funds. In 1972, 70 percent of the funding for this agency in Texas came from federal aid. The new staff capacity was available for SEA administrators or state boards that wanted a more activist role in local education.

Local control advocates such as teacher unions, school boards, and administrator associations feud among themselves and provide a vacuum that state control activists can exploit. These education groups cannot agree on common policies with their old allies such as parent organizations, the American Association of University Women, and the League of Women Voters. The loss of public confidence in professional educators and the decline of achievement scores have created an attitude among many legislators that local school employees can no longer be given much discretion.

State Accountability and Program Mandates

Between 1966 and 1976, thirty-five states passed accountability statutes, and fourteen claimed to have "comprehensive systems" with several components. Despite a lack of common definition and concepts, 4,000 pieces of accountability literature were published. In effect, accountability has focused state control on school outcomes in addition to state-defined minimum inputs. Some of the areas where state accountability control has expanded are requirements for new budget formats (including program budgeting), new teacher evaluation requirements, new state tests and assessment devices that reorient local curricula to the state tests, state mandated procedures for local educational objective setting, parent advisory councils for school sites, and state specified minimum competency standards for high school graduation.

The demand for equal opportunity has spawned new state programs for populations with special needs (Ward and Anthony, 1992). States now classify children in several ways and mandate services and standards for the various categories of students. Some of these pupil classifications are vocational education, career education, the mentally gifted, disadvantaged migrants, underachievers, non-English speaking, American Indians, pregnant minors, foster children, delinquent children, and twenty or more different categories of handicapped children.

In sum, some of the major policy areas that show the dramatic increase of state influence in the last two decades are state administration of federal categorical grants, the state role in education finance, state requirements for educational accountability, state specifications and programs for children with special needs, and state efforts to increase academic standards. Substantive changes have become possible in large part due to an increase in the institutional capacity of states to intervene in local affairs. Thus most state legislatures have added staff and research capacity, and they also now meet annually or for more extended sessions than in earlier years.

State legislative staffs increased by 130 percent between 1968 and 1974 (Rosenthal and Fuhrman, 1981). The 1983 academic reform era galvanized a significant increase in state testing and curricular experts, and state staff increased in the mid-1980's to implement new teacher policies including career ladders.

Another factor increasing state influence is the increased conflict among traditional supporters of local control. Local control advocates--such as teachers' unions, school boards, and school administrators associations--frequently feud among themselves and provide a vacuum that state control activists can exploit. These education groups cannot agree on common policies with their old allies such as the PTA. The loss of public confidence in professional educators and the decline of achievement scores also cause many state legislators to feel that local school employees should no longer be given so much discretion (Murphy, 1991).

As a means to implement state influences, key structural changes leading to the growth and diversification of state tax sources have developed (Wirt and Kirst, 1982). From 1960 to 1979, eleven states adopted a personal income tax, nine a corporate tax, and ten a general sales tax. Thirty-seven states used all three of these revenue sources in 1979 compared with just nineteen in 1960. State income taxes provided 35 percent of all tax revenue in 1978 compared to 19 percent in 1969. This diversification of the revenue systems provided the states with a capacity to increase services that was further enhanced by numerous tax increases to fund reforms after 1983. The favorite tax to increase was the sales tax, either through rate increases or extension of the sales tax base to services. Even states with slow economic growth raised the sales tax from 1983 to 1986, including Arkansas, South Carolina, and New Mexico.

State Reforms in a Era of Academic Excellence

The extent of state education reform after 1983 is startling even when one acknowledges that states have been on the move since 1965. By July 1984 the Education Commission of the States reported that 250 state task forces had sprung up to study every aspect of local education and to recommend changes in local control. The state legislative output by 1985 was prodigious and can be categorized as follows:

Teachers: career ladders, incentive pay systems, and training/certification measures.

The academic experience: curriculum/graduation requirements, testing, enrichment programs, academic recognition, and minority programs.

Financing: state support, tax increases, changes in funding formulas, and improvements in quality.

Organization and structure: academic calendar, articulation, corporate-school partnerships, and academic bankruptcy.

These categories do not, of course, include all the changes states have enacted, but they do cover the most popular types of reform (Doyle & Cooper, 1991).

Change in general government's view of an appropriate SEA role can be traced to legislative concern that dollar equalization did not always lead to equal education services because of fundamental differences in local capacity; to gubernatorial assertion that state economic interests were allied with state reputation for educational quality; and to legislative response to citizen complaints that local officials were not meeting their responsibilities and that state standards or assistance was required. Conversely, where general government actors have not modified their view of an appropriate state education role state-level decision makers believe, as a Nebraska legislator put it, that "the local schools are doing a pretty good job," or that the state's entrenched local control mores--e.g., in Maine and Oregon--make substantive state involvement politically infeasible (M. McLaughlin, p. 65).

What is striking about the 1983-87 state reform era was (1) the rapidity of the spread in similar policies among the states and (2) the tendency for the reforms to impact similarly states with highly dissimilar political cultures. Traditional bastions of local control like Maine and Arizona were extremely active in this round of reform along with more centralized states like Florida and California. The rapidly spreading reforms also penetrated the technical core of local instruction--curriculum, testing, and teacher performance--in a way that expanded dramatically on state school improvement programs before 1983.

State Techniques for Curriculum Control

What did these general considerations mean when states turned to implementing curricular reforms? Margaret Goertz has prepared a matrix of instruments that states use to influence local academic standards and overcome local resistance to state-imposed curriculum. She distinguishes between state (1) performance standards that measure an individual's performance through tested achievement and observations, (2) program standards that include curricular requirements, program specifications, and other state requirements affecting time in school, class size, and staffing, and (3) behavior standards that include attendance requirements, disciplinary codes, homework, and so forth.

Her fifty-state survey demonstrates dramatic increases from 1983-86 in state specification and influence in all these types of standards. A closer analysis, through, reveals that these reforms only accelerated a state policy trend that began over fifteen years ago in such areas as compensatory and special education. But the 1983-86 state initiatives are focused on the core academic subjects rather than special services for target groups.

While the scope of state activity is very wide, the effectiveness of state influence on local practice has been questioned. Arthur Wise thinks it is quite potent, while John Meyer sees the reverse through "loose coupling" between state and local organizations (Wise, 1979 and Meyer, 1986). Curriculum alignment is one concept states are using to control local curriculum more tightly and overcome the local capacity to thwart implementation. The key is to have the same curricular content emphasized and covered across the state: curricular frameworks, tests, textbook adoption criteria, accreditation standards, university entrance content expectancies, and criteria for teacher evaluation. The identical content coverage must be a single strong thread woven through all of these state policy instruments, binding all to certain standards. Local-control advocates will be appropriately concerned about such a strategy, but local authorities can usually pick and choose what they will emphasize to some extent.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE FEDERAL ROLE

In 1950, when the U.S. Office of Education (USOE) was transferred to the Federal Security Agency--forerunner to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW)--it had a staff of three hundred to spend $40 million. Growth was slow and largely unrecognized. By 1963 forty-two departments, agencies, and bureaus of the government were involved in education to some degree. The Department of Defense and the Veterans Administration spend more on educational programs than the USOE and National Science Foundation combined. The Office of Education appointed personnel who were specialists and consultants in such areas as mathematics, libraries, and school transport; these specialists identified primarily with the National Education Association (NEA). grant programs operated through deference to state priorities and judgments. State administrators were regarded by USOE as colleagues who should have the maximum decision-making discretion permitted by categorical laws.

While the era of 1963-1972 brought dramatic increased in federal activity, the essential mode of delivering services for USOE remained the same. The differential funding route was the key mode, seeking bigger and bolder categorical programs and demonstration programs. The delivery system for these categories continued to stress the superior ability of state departments of education to review local projects. Indeed, the current collection of overlapping and complex categorical aids evolved as a mode of federal action that a number of otherwise dissenting educational interests could agree on (James Sundquist, 1968). It was not the result of any rational plan for federal intervention but rather an outcome of political bargaining and coalition formation. Former USOE head Harold Howe expressed its essence this way:

> Whatever its limitations, the categorical aid approach gives the states and local communities a great deal of leeway in designing educational programs to meet various needs. In essence, the Federal government says to the states (and cities) "Here is some money to solve this particular program; you figure out how to do it..." But whatever the criticisms which can in justice be leveled against categorical aid to education, I believe that we must stick with it, rather than electing general aid as an alternative. The postwar period has radically altered the demands we place on our schools; a purely local and state viewpoint of education cannot produce an educational system that will serve national interest in addition to more localized concerns (Harold Howe, 1967).

An incremental shift in the style of USOE administration also came with expanded categories. The traditional provision of specialized consultants and the employment of subject matter specialists were ended in favor of managers and generalists who had public administration rather than professional education backgrounds. These newer federal administrators were more aggressive, creating a political backlash against federal regulation that Ronald Reagan was able to highlight in his 1980 campaign.

Modes of Federal Influence

Since the 1950's there have been basically six alternative modes of federal influence upon state and local education organizations:

1. General aid: Provide no-strings aid to state and local education agencies or such minimal earmarks as teacher salaries. A modified form of general aid was proposed by President Reagan in 1981. He consolidated numerous categories into a single block grant for local education purposes. No general-aid bill has ever been approved by the Congress and this issue died in 1964 with the defeat of President Kennedy's proposals.

2. Stimulate through differential funding: Earmark categories of aid, provide financial incentives through matching grants, fund demonstration projects, and purchase specific services. This is the approach of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the dominant mode.

3. Regulate: Legally specify behaviors, impose standards, certify and license, enforce accountability procedures. The bilingual regulations proposed by the Carter administration (and rescinded by President Reagan) are a good example.

4. Discover knowledge and make it available: Commission research studies, gather and make other statistical data available. The National Science Foundation and OERI perform the first function, and the National Center for Education Statistics the second.

5. Provide services: Furnish technical assistance and consultants in specialized areas or subjects. For example, the Office of Civil Rights will advise school districts that are designing voluntary desegregation plans.

6. Exert moral suasion: Develop vision and question assumptions through publications and speeches by top officials. Thus President Reagan's Secretary of Education William Bennett advocated three C's--content, character, and choice--in numerous speeches and articles in the popular media. This mode of federal influence is termed "the bully pulpit" by the press.

The Reagan administration endorsed a tuition tax credit to reimburse parents who send their children to private schools. Although various members of Congress have pushed this idea for decades, this was the first time a president had endorsed it. While he was defeated, federal aid to private schools will continue to be a major issue during the 1990s, although vociferously and unanimously opposed by public education interest groups.

Overall the Reagan administration promoted five other basic changes in the federal educational policy in addition to assisting private schools, moving:

1. from a prime concern with equity to more concern with quality, efficiency, and state and local freedom to choose;
2. from a larger and more influential federal role to a mitigated federal role;
3. from mistrust of the motives and capacity of state and local educators to a renewed faith in governing units outside of Washington;
4. from categorical grants to more unrestricted types of financial aid;
5. from detailed and prescriptive regulations to deregulation.

The Bush administration increased federal categorical aid more than Reagan but was unable to enact any bold new proposals. The federal role is larger than its 6 percent of finance share (State 50%, 44% local). Prior to 1990, federal influence relied on categorical grants, R&D, and the bully pulpit. The regulations around categorical grants provide some leverage over state and local funds. But after 1990, Federal policy shifted to accomplishing national goals and helping to create national curriculum content standards and exams. These nationalizing influences on curriculum could presage a major shift in U.S. education governance with effects similar to SAT and ACT, but with higher level standards. Note that national exams and standards are not part of the federal government, but rather voluntary organizations like the National Education Goals Panel and the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards. This quasi government style has a long tradition in the U.S.

An Overview of Educational Governance History

This historical overview has traced the changes in educational governance since the turn of the century. These trends have brought profound change from 1900 when one room rural schools predominated with governance dominated by superintendents and boards. The superintendent and school board have become more of a reactive force, trying to juggle diverse and changing coalitions across different issues. Many school reforms such as new math have disappeared, but some left structural changes that could be easily monitored and that created a constituency. Consequently, a partial legacy from 1960-1980 era was tremendous growth in the specialized functions of the school, including administrative specialists in career education, bilingual education, nutrition, health, remedial reading, and so on. Many of these new structural layers diluted the superintendent's influence because the specialists were paid separately by federal or state categorical programs. Hence they were insulated from the superintendent's influence by separate financing and the requirements of higher levels of government.

One element that today is very different for local authorities is the intensity and scope of recent state policy actions. The most striking feature of state-local relations in the last twenty years has been this growth in state control over education. Today organizations of professional educators and local school boards are making suggestions for only marginal changes in proposed new state policies. And under the Reagan administration, new federal initiatives were restricted to rhetoric, data collecting, and sponsoring small pilot programs.

These trends cede considerably more control of education to the states. However, there will be enormous variation in how states take control--from the highly aggressive states, such as California and Texas, to the more passive, such as New Hampshire and Colorado. Dangers attend aggressive, broad-based state education policy. States change policy through statutes and regulations, which have a standardizing effect. Also, the focus of state policymaking is no longer on categorical groups, such as handicapped or minority students. Instead it is aimed at the central core of instructional policy, including what should be taught, how it should be taught, and who should teach it. State-level political actors leading the current wave of reform are legislators, governors, and business interests. The traditional education interest groups--teachers, administrators, and school boards--have been used primarily in pro forma consultative roles.

Also noteworthy is that increasing state control has not been limited to such traditionally high-control states as California and Florida. The high tide of state intervention in local instructional policy is washing over Virginia and Connecticut--longtime bastions of local control. National movements and widespread media coverage have played a crucial role in the current reform wave, just as they did with the 1970's issues of school finance reform and minimum competency testing. Some state initiatives, such as high school graduation standards, moved through the states without any federal mandate or organized interest-group lobbying.

The Squeeze From the Bottom

As a result of these changing internal and external forces, the discretionary zone of local superintendents and boards has been progressively squeezed into a smaller and smaller area. The superintendent's discretion is squeezed from the top by increasing regulations from the legislative, administrative, and judicial arms of the federal and state governments, as noted. In addition, there has been the expanding influence of private interest groups and professional reformers, such as the Ford Foundation, and the Council for Basic Education. Moreover, interstate groups, such as the Education Commission of the States, increased their influence, as did nationally oriented organizations, such as the Council for Exceptional Children. All over the nation, networks of individuals and groups sprang up to spread school finance reform, competency testing, increased academic standards, and other programs.

Superintendents and local boards also found their decision-making powers squeezed from the bottom by forces such as the growth of local collective bargaining contracts reinforced by national teacher organizations. A national study documents the incursion of these organizations into educational policy (Cresswell and Murphy, 1980). And, as noted, the last three decades have been a growth period for local interest groups often resulting from national social movements.

A yet-unstudied question is whether these constraints and forces external to the local settings have been more influential and effective than those of the 1920-1950 era, for example, the Progressives and professional societies.

The social movements of this period differ from those of the nineteenth century, exemplified by Horace Mann, which were interested in building institutions like the schools. Today social movements are interested in challenging public institutions and trying to make them more responsive to forces outside the local administrative structure. Some would even assert that these movements help fragment school decision making so that schools cannot function effectively. The litany of the media portrays violence, vandalism, and declining test scores as the predominant condition of public education.

In California, for example, this situation has become so serious that the schools increasingly suffer from shock and overload characterized by loss of morale and too few resources to operate all the programs the society expects schools to offer. The issue then becomes how much change and agitation a public institution can take and still continue to function effectively. Californians are confronted with numerous successive initiatives such as Proposition 13, vouchers, spending limits, and an extreme version of all the other forces sketched above. Citizens there and elsewhere go to their local school board and superintendent expecting redress of their problems only to find that the decision-making power is at the state or some other nonlocal level. The impression grows that no one is "in charge" of public education.

All of this does not mean that local school authorities are helpless. Rather it means that they cannot control their agenda or shape decision outcomes as they could in the past. The superintendent must deal with shifting and ephemeral coalitions that might yield him some temporary marginal advantages. But many of the policy items on the local agenda arise from external forces, such as state and federal governments, or from the pressures of established local interest groups, including teachers.

The earlier 1920-1960 year of the "administrative chief" has passed with profound consequences; the new school politics is much more complex and less malleable.

Despite these cumulative institutional choices to move away from local control, there are indications that U.S. citizens are unhappy with the changes. Coombs gives a vigorous case for more local control (Coombs, 1987):

> 1. Public opinion still supports more local influence and less influence for higher governments.
> 2. Local school politics tend to be more democratic in several important ways than are decisions made at higher levels.
> 3. While there will be tension between state and local policymakers, the result is policy that is better adapted to diverse local contexts.
> 4. Further erosion of the local role risks diminishing public support for the public schools.(p.8)

In support of the first point, Coombs cites relevant 1986 Gallup poll data:

PUBLIC VIEWS ABOUT WHO SHOULD CONTROL SCHOOLS

Should have:	Federal Government	State Government	Local School Board
More influence	26%	45%	57%
Less influence	53	32	17
Same as now	12	16	17
Don't know	9	7	9
	100%	100%	100%

Source: Gallup Poll, 1986

The biggest loser in this public referendum is the federal government, but note that local school board influence is preferred much more often than state government.

Despite these public preferences, the 1992 national policy debate focused on national standards and national exams. This would shift governance even more away from the local context. A counter move would be to strengthen the local school board. Several reports recommend that states recharter school boards as educational policy boards that surrender board operational oversight and expenditure control and prohibit board hiring below the level of the superintendent (Danzberger, Kirst, Usdan, 1992). School boards would focus on strategic planning and curriculum standards rather than operational details. Without such a change in the local boards to restore confidence in local governance, the probable outcome is a continued flow of influence to non-local levels. Americans have made an institutional choice over many years to drastically alter the once preeminent value of local control by a school board and professional administrative staff.

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CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON SCHOOL-BASED S~~O~~OCIAL SERVICES IN THE UNITED STATES

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Introduction

Pressure has mounted since the mid-1980s to revitalize and deepen the provision of health and social services through the schools. [1] This pressure has been building in response to two primary developments. First, most generally, there has emerged the conviction that children in this country have had to bear the costs of unprecedented levels of adult self-indulgence, thoughtlessness, incompetence, and perhaps most importantly, misfortune. A vast array of physical, emotional, and social problems that are battering the lives of school children seem to be caused by the inability of adults to live productive, healthy lives, to build and maintain families able to comfort and nurture children, or to organize communities that protect the young from emotional stress and physical harm. There has emerged a sense that today children really do face harder, more dangerous lives than in the past. And, this argument concludes, since children are ordinarily incapable of responding to serious problems in healthy ways that ensure even their survival -- let alone their ability to flourish -- the schools should provide health and social services to help students because no one else is willing or able to rescue them.

Second, more specific to the educational enterprise, one of the critiques of the school reforms that followed the release of *A Nation at Risk* in 1983 has argued that the "first wave" of initiatives concentrated exclusively on tightening the screws on students to get them to improve their academic performance. The reforms, this argument runs, has consisted largely of state-level efforts to tighten graduation requirements and institute competency tests for students and many new teachers. The reforms' thrust is thought to narrow the definition of the function of schools, to focus resources on improving traditional measures of academic achievement. Narrowing the function of schooling appears to neglect many of the broader social purposes of education that had captured the imaginations of activists for a generation or more. An excessively narrow aspiration of attempting to achieve academic excellence, this argument concludes, could lead to the delegitimation -- and ultimately to the divestment -- of many of the social services (and related social service curricula) that many came to see, by 1980, as essential to developing the "whole child."

Over the past half-dozen years these two trends have converged to inspire a new generation of enthusiasm for delivering health and social services through the schools (i.e., maintaining comprehensive health clinics, providing dental services, offering counseling and social work services to suicidal adolescents or pre-pubescent anorexics), and for expanding the associated social service curricular areas (i.e., health education, drug abuse education, parenting classes for pregnant adolescents).

Many of these calls to action seem unaware that American schools have provided social services for a century. There is much to be learned from reconstructing this involvement, about the sources and pattern of initiation, about the reception from families, about the influence of occupations undergoing professionalization, about the control of financial sponsors, and about the impact on students. This interpretive overview will attempt to periodize the history of social services in schools, to examine the ebb and flow of their fortunes, and to understand their meaning for the educational enterprise.

The Formative Period, 1880-1917: The Role of Private Initiative

The early history of social services in the schools was closely related to the changing role of formal education in America, particularly, but not exclusively, at the secondary level. Once primarily dedicated to serving the elite, the high school became an increasingly mass institution after the 1880s. The establishment of social services played an important part in this transformation, since not only did more students attend high school, but those who enrolled came increasingly from diverse origins: from the middle and working classes, and from ethnic and racial minority groups, children whose attendance could be assured only through sustained attention to making the schools more attractive and considerate of their aspirations and personal social circumstances. Traditional, academic programs characteristic of the earlier classical schools would neither appeal intellectually to the new constituencies nor provide the care necessary to retain those children who were willing to attend once they had actually enrolled in school. The transformed mission of secondary schooling during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, to prepare the vast majority of children for life -- by enhancing their vocational skills, improving the efficiency of their occupational choices, preventing social maladjustment, and insuring adequate levels of personal hygiene and public health -- obligated schools to offer more than traditional classes in history, science, mathematics, and languages.

The transformation of schooling that led to the introduction of social services was rooted in several related intellectual shifts that occurred during the late nineteenth century. The first shift accepted the active intentional intervention of public institutions into traditionally private relationships and affairs. Confidence about turning to public policy and institutions replaced the ambivalence about interventionary practices that had dominated the early nineteenth century. Public policy became more aggressive, increasingly committed to ameliorating social problems by controlling the development or behavior of individuals and their institutions. Private interests sought alliances with public authorities at all governmental levels. Together they became excited about the role that educative agencies could play in improving the lives of individuals and communities. As one expression of this movement to expand the domain of legitimate public action, consequently, schools came to perform functions previously considered outside of their purview, such as explicit vocational training, family rehabilitation, occupational selection and guidance, and immunization against disease.

A second shift involved the redefinition of "democracy" and "equality of opportunity" as they were applied to the role of schools in shaping both access to social and economic rewards and the ambitions of children. During the earlier era of the "common schools," children from all social classes and backgrounds were theoretically and ideally to have been educated in the same classrooms and in the same curricula, so that they might develop common values and similar aspirations, and be prepared to face their lives on a fairly equal footing; the children of privilege and of the poor able to achieve whatever they were entitled to on the basis of merit and application. This ideal vision of the common school was rather quickly undermined, however, as both affluent and ambitious middle-class parents found ways of ensuring that poorer children would attend separate schools, or would abandon irrelevant classical programs to enter the workforce at age twelve or so. By the end of the century, reformers were calling attention to the fact that the largely college-preparatory, classical studies offered in most schools appealed to relatively few working-class children, particularly those whose families lacked sufficient discretionary income to support extended education beyond the common elementary schools. It became fashionable and progressive to challenge the "unfairness" of the rigid classical academic curricula that offered nothing of value to the vast majority of America's youth. [2] In the interests of fairness, democratic access, and of increasing the appeal of extended schooling, reformers called for changing the education available to adolescents. In order to make the schools more "democratic," they endorsed a variety of non-academic, social service courses in the practical arts, domestic sciences, and health fields, as well as a limited range of direct services for children who came from less privileged circumstances.

The final shift underlying the social service movement -- a result of the first two --occurred when educators began to redefine the social functions of schooling more ambitiously than simply teaching disciplinary knowledge to privileged students. They voiced a challenge to a variety of social groups to help stir enthusiasm about the mission that the schools might play in shaping modern industrial America. Educational leaders themselves re-invented Horace Mann's brilliant marketing strategy for marshaling support for tax-supported schools by "proving" that public education was "convertible into houses and lands, as well as into power and virtue." [3] The progressives affirmed the indispensable role that schools might play in solving virtually every domestic economic and social problem: urban and labor disorder, the alienation of the lower classes, deteriorating public health and sanitation, immigrant communities in need of Americanization, spreading immorality, physical disability, and severe family disorganization that contributed to juvenile delinquency and ultimately to adult crime. Health services advocate Lewis Terman drew one of the most expansive visions for the social services movement when he claimed that "the public school has not fulfilled its duty when the child alone is educated within its walls. The school must be the educational center, the social center, and the hygiene center of the community in which it is located -- a hub from which will radiate influences for social betterment in many lives." [4] Traditional academic machinery and methods would be inadequate to respond to this vastly redefined educational purpose. To be responsible for solving these problems, schools would, the reformers concluded, have to be granted far more authority and discretion over the lives of children, and indirectly, over the lives of their students' parents. And they would require considerably more financial and personnel resources.

Although school administrators and teachers embraced the social services movement, the initial impetus for establishing and maintaining most initiatives came from outside of the schools. In particular, local women's groups, philanthropists, settlement house workers, and other private sector groups launched the movement to organize health and social services for school children. The educational establishment consistently welcomed the private efforts, particularly the considerable financial resources that settlements and philanthropies provided, and the volunteer labor that women's clubs offered. Educational leaders graciously cooperated with virtually every private group that was interested in devoting labor and money to establish and maintain school-based social services. [5]

But it proved to be public service oriented women -- through their own clubs, as leaders or workers in the settlements, or as lobbyists with local urban charities and philanthropies -- who were instrumental in moving the schools to adopt virtually all of the social services (and many of the other important innovations, such as the kindergarten), during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the era before the social service fields were professionalized, volunteers from such organizations donated food to schools for the first subsidized lunch programs, and often stood in line to serve the students their meals. They helped to locate and install domestic science equipment and often instructed students in gourmet cooking or fine sewing. They recruited physicians to present lectures on personal and social hygiene. When they could not actually provide the products necessary to sustain the services themselves, they cooperated with other influential civic groups interested in child welfare and juvenile delinquency to lobby for the public provision of services to children. They joined progressive organizations, for example, to press for the extension of compulsory attendance and child labor legislation, the creation of social and recreational centers and public playgrounds, and the financing of special rooms and facilities in schools for handicapped children.

Almost without exception, private and public interests cooperated in organizing health and social services in schools principally to increase the schools' holding power over the new constituencies, many of which were notoriously reluctant to have their children withdraw from the workforce or to remain in school beyond the age of compulsory attendance. Providing medical inspections and inoculations, eyeglasses, warm coats, and hot lunches, visits to family homes to convince an Italian parent to allow his son to graduate from high school, and many other new services, were ways of building loyalty to the schools, trust in them as responsive local public institutions. Marketing strategies for the social service fields differed, but during the formative period virtually all of them involved maximizing participation in school on the part of working-class and immigrant children. Some were introduced to make children healthy enough to attend on a regular basis: nurses, medical inspectors, vaccinators, dentists, and an assortment of health educators and nutrition experts were recruited to improve the physical conditions of students whose lives were spent too often on the debilitating streets; special open-air or anemic classrooms were established to accommodate the needs of children whose respiratory ailments would have kept them isolated in non-educational institutions. Some programs were nurtured to provide more direct relief from poverty and unemployment -- food and clothing, possibly assistance for adults in finding a job -- so that children would not be too ashamed to attend school; this was often the function of the first visiting teachers (school social workers). Other programs were designed to make school more appealing to children with less academic ambition: the un-bookish practical and manual arts, social service curricula, and other personal development subject matter were offered as a diversion, if not a comprehensive alternative to, core academic experiences.

During the formative period, health and social services were organized in schools almost exclusively in the nation's larger, diverse urban centers. Although educationally progressive suburbs and smaller communities with fewer than 20,000 inhabitants occasionally experimented with health and physical education programs, national surveys found that only a handful of larger cities exhibited any substantial commitment to maintaining non-academic social services, except for courses in domestic science and the practical arts, which were introduced in almost every school system by 1910. From studies of the timing of the creation and spread of social services, it seems clear that the existence of a visible and demanding clientele -- a critical mass of working-class and immigrant school-age children -- was a precondition for the organization of school-based social services.

Such preconditions existed in Chicago, for example, but not in a group of other communities in northern Illinois whose involvement in social services and social service curricula has been thoroughly examined. [6] The early experiences of these towns reflected the timing and pace of developments in similar communities across the nation. In Chicago, for example, to complement the practical arts and vocation programs established during the 1890s in both elementary and high schools throughout the city, during the early twentieth century the Board of Education approved the organization of a comprehensive array of health and welfare services, subsidized food programs, special segregated facilities for habitual truants and delinquents, vocational guidance and counseling departments, child study and diagnostic testing bureaus, social centers, playgrounds and physical education activities, continuation schools, instruction in safety and hygiene, and even an abortive series of sex education lectures. Various surveys conducted before 1922 suggest that of the nation's 80 largest cities, perhaps 75 percent maintained some combination of similar social programs. Although Chicago led the movement to establish many delinquency prevention and remediation programs, by and large it was neither exceptionally progressive nor tardy in organizing school-based social services.

The pattern of introducing social services outside of the largest cities was irregular and haphazard. They were often established on a part-time basis by spreading a single staff member across several fields. If personnel were aggressive in promoting one area over another, or if merchandising agents from manual arts or home economics supply companies convinced an administrator of the distinctive value of his or her equipment, work in those areas might be supported briefly. Investments fluctuated with the economic health of the community and the whims of administrators. When it existed at all, commitment was intermittent. And many of the social services were often opposed as inappropriate or illegal activities undeserving of public subsidy. William Reese, in particular, has explored the scope and nature of resistance to school-based social services, and has exposed the particularly virulent political opposition in many medium-sized cities to food and medical programs that were denounced as collectivist. [7]

As one might expect, privileged suburbs devoted virtually no resources to providing social services through the schools (or through any other public or private organizations for that matter). Before World War I, for example, Evanston, Illinois spent nothing on non-academic services or coursework, except for a few industrial arts classes after 1901, and one or two lectures on physical culture and domestic science. One of the wealthiest and most highly regarded academic systems in the state, Evanston maintained no guidance or counseling, health, health education, or social welfare programs. As an elite community with a college-bound adolescent constituency, there were few dropouts and almost no truancy. Although the city was increasingly settled by working-class whites and black service workers, there was little pressure to broaden the system's rigorous, but narrowly classical curriculum. Even the city's poorer children graduated from high school and many aspired to enter an institution of higher education. Public authorities assumed that parents were fully responsible for their children, and public services beyond the municipality's park system were not necessary to insure the health and well-being of the city's children. [8]

The pattern was similar in smaller working-class communities, like Blue Island and Waukegan, Illinois. Even though fewer than 15 percent of their high school graduates went on to college, and dropouts were becoming a visible problem by 1910, resources were concentrated almost exclusively on the practical arts curricular fields. Although Waukegan attempted to set up a small program in physical education and hygiene, and tried to maintain a lunch program at the high school, educational authorities in both communities were no more interested in committing local public funds to social services than were their counterparts in Evanston. In the competition for school-based resources, the core academic faculty persisted in defending the tradition mission of the schools, that of offering a narrow, classical education to the local academic elite. Nor, by and large, did the embryonic private sector interests have sufficient presence to counteract the schools' relatively narrow definition of its mission.

The role of private initiative, and the struggle to secure public support for school-based social services can be illustrated by examining the process through which Chicago and Waukegan first became involved with subsidized school lunch programs. The movement began in Chicago during the 1890s with increasing criticism of prevailing arrangements for allowing children to secure their mid-day meals. At Englewood High School, for example, some students brought food from home. Others purchased waffles from a wagon parked near the school. Others patronized a local bakery, where they gorged themselves on pie, dill pickles, and cream puffs. Some repasts consisted simply of soda fountain fare. Other pupils rushed to inconvenient restaurants, where slow service forced them to gobble their lunches before running back to get to their classes on time. One student recalled that this arrangement resulted in a "pain in the stomach, an ache in the head, a zero in the teacher's classbook, and a great daub of blueberry pie on the shirtwaist." Classes during the afternoon were "lifeless." The school building was "foul with the remnants of lunch." The school yard, and most probably the adjacent streets and lawns, were "so bestrewn with paper bags, banana peels, fragments of broken meats, and decadent bones that residents and owners thereof were shaken by a chronic palsy which was due half to wrath and half to malaria." [9]

A decade of criticism led to the establishment of a school lunch room in 1903, a practice increasingly common in larger districts. What was noteworthy about the Englewood experiment was the direct and extensive participation of the local women's club. The club members' voluntary contribution of time, effort, and foodstuffs enabled the school to prepare and sell nutritious meals at prices lower than students paid for inferior lunches in the vicinity. A varied menu made it possible to purchase a complete meal for eleven or twelve cents, about the cost of a lunch brought from home. Men accustomed to eating in a Chicago restaurant, one teacher observed, would agree that they would be fortunate to pay only thirteen cents for a "dish of oyster soup, a portion of chicken pie, a hot biscuit and butter, and a doughnut 'like mother used to make,' all in abundant quantity, all appetizing, and all served, not by young men who grow surly unless bribed to do their duty, but by ladies whose presence would adorn any home or grace any social function." Indeed, wholesome, inexpensive food was not the only, nor even the most obvious, benefit. The pupils were able to meet daily with many of "the best women of the community," an opportunity that was in itself "a privilege and an education." The volunteers' presence quickly proved to be a potent, yet inconspicuous, factor in assuring discipline, the school staff agreed, and their unselfish service inspired proper citizenship. [10]

The privately-sponsored program was also judged an educational success in more traditional terms. Children missed fewer days of school because they developed fewer colds and less dyspepsia. Epidemics, once rampant in the neighborhood, became uncommon. Scholarship improved with better attendance. Tardiness among the afternoon classes was virtually eliminated.

Although the successes of the lunchrooms were roundly applauded, it is understandable that neighboring tradespeople, whose businesses were devastated by the schools' food programs, would be restrained in their enthusiasm. Competition forced bakers to close; the waffle man suffered; the soda fountain lost considerable revenue. The pain of such economic injury was occasionally expressed in lawsuits challenging the schools' right to construct and operate lunchrooms. Even the Board's attorney advised in 1908 that the public schools had no right to spend money on any purpose other than direct education.

Despite the attorney's warning, the Board explored its prerogative to not only serve lunches but to subsidize their preparation with public funds. As evidence of malnutrition mounted during the first decade of the twentieth century, school principals had begun approaching representatives of charity organizations and women's clubs to increase their generosity toward the food programs to enable more poor children to receive the benefits of a healthy meal. The

Board began to move more aggressively to channel its own resources into the programs that were supported by the private agencies. As was often the case with special services, heavily subsidized "penny lunches" were first provided at the Board's expense to pupils attending one of the system's institutions for crippled children. [11] It was not until late 1910 that the Board approved a trial penny lunch program for students in regular schools, whose mental progress was thought to be "retarded by the lack of nourishing food." For schools in neighborhoods serving the city's neediest children, the district initially provided facilities and purchased ovens and other equipment to make it easier and cheaper to offer balanced meals on the school grounds. The women's clubs continued to donate some food, and to serve many meals, but as the experiment broadened, the volunteers were less able to provide the bulk of the service themselves, and the Board assumed considerable responsibility for the lunch program generally, and almost exclusive control over the subsidized penny lunch venture. The Board agreed with civic leaders in Toledo, who in the same year recognized that "the brain cannot gnaw on problems while the stomach is gnawing on its empty self." Furthermore, educational administrators in Chicago were aware that children from different ethnic neighborhoods preferred different foods, a situation brought into bold relief, perhaps, by the distressing experiences in other cities where riots greeted the efforts of schools to design and enforce a uniform menu. In Chicago, Jewish children attending the Foster school, for example, were served Kosher meals; Italian students at Adams and Jackson were delighted with macaroni, bread, and syrup. [12]

The penny lunches, one of the most visible social service programs established in larger cities during the early twentieth century, were judged a successful investment for Chicago. "Although the work is still in the experimental stage," the superintendent stated just a year after the general introduction of the penny lunches, "the consensus of opinion is overwhelmingly in favor of continuing it and enlarging its scope." Children who received the subsidized meals, it was agreed, "have shown marked improvement, not only in their physical condition, but also in the character of their [school] work." The program's director enthusiastically endorsed the penny lunches in 1912. She and other school leaders were so convinced that the community had so completely recognized the advantages of "Bread as a Means of Education," that school architects would have to reckon with incorporating this progressive feature in their future designs by adding kitchens, storage rooms, and eating facilities. [13]

While commonplace in cities like Chicago (one survey found that more than 100 cities were serving penny lunches to needy children before World War I), such enthusiasm and confidence of public support for subsidized school lunches was relatively rare in smaller communities during this period. The abortive attempt to shift support for school-based meals from private to public coffers in Waukegan illustrates another -- perhaps more common -- tendency in the early twentieth century. As in Chicago, students in Waukegan were dissatisfied with their schools' lack of an organized lunch program. Three-fourths of the high school's 341 students petitioned the Board of Education in 1910 to establish some sort of formal facility. A local civic association, the Sesame Club, volunteered to provide the program's operating costs if the Board made a room and appropriate equipment available. The Board accepted the Club's invitation. Within a year the lunchroom, which served meals at an average cost of a dime, was virtually self-sustaining. The Club asked the Board to assume full responsibility for the experimental project. Although the Board agreed in principle to sponsor the program, inadequate funds postponed action, and the Sesame Club continued to support the facility. This arrangement continued until after World War I, when another local women's club assumed responsibility for preparing and serving lunches at the school. Within another year, however, club members began to complain that operating the lunchroom placed too great a burden on their organization's coffers, and threatened to withdraw completely unless the Board helped them financially. Initially the Board agreed to make up any deficit caused by the lunch program, but it appears that the funds were not forthcoming because the women -- discouraged by the city's apparent lack of commitment to the malnourished students -- disassociated themselves from the project at the end of the academic year. Faced with funding the entire program, the Board recommended that the district provide no main courses, but instead sell only milk, soup, chocolate, and ice cream, requiring students to bring sandwiches from home. This arrangement prevailed until the federal government made funds available for subsidized food programs after World War II. [14]

Examples of similar efforts in social work, sex education and hygiene, guidance and counseling, medical inspection, dental clinics, open-air classrooms, and other social service ventures could easily be substituted for this brief reconstruction of the subsidized penny lunch initiative. During the formative period, prior to World War I, school-based social services were established and sustained largely through private-sector efforts. Throughout most of America's communities, the progressive agenda of instituting social services in the schools died aborning or were only tentatively tolerated alongside regular academic classrooms. The central lesson of the origins of the social services continued to shape their relationship to schools for decades. *While schools were willing to "house" the social service programs, they effectively resisted "adopting" them.* As long as external financial support could be found, the schools attempted to make time and space for them. When such assistance evaporated, so did the services; or at best, their scope was severely constricted, and their missions were dramatically narrowed.

The Quest for Legitimacy and Professionalism: Social Services in Prosperity and Depression, 1918-1959

Although the fledgling social services continued to struggle, with at best a fragile connection to the public schools, the era following World War I witnessed a strong public drive to ensure that such efforts were accepted as legitimate and merited more than a few square feet of building space in which to serve lunch, or more than thirty minutes a year for a lecture on "Kindness to All Living Things." The campaign to embed the social services and associated curricula more deeply and genuinely in the schools got off to a booming start with the release of the National Education Association's *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education* in 1918. The *Principles,* which challenged the academic functions of schooling with a relentless call for attention to using educational institutions to improve health, to make vocational choices and preparation more efficient, and to strengthen a variety of personal social and management skills. They provided an influential, systematic, sustained, and coherent justification for the support of social services. Its vision of the schools' engagement in a broad range of social functions gave inspiration and ammunition to unimaginative, or less courageous, administrators in districts with resources concentrated on traditional classical academic programs to experiment with or expand their health and social services. Although the *Principles* did not offer a new way of looking at schools, since many of their objectives were already operational in some larger communities, the report imposed a uniform purposefulness on a set of programs that most educators had thought of a discrete. [15]

The effect of the *Cardinal Principles* was buttressed by other events. World War I itself played a role in expanding the social services over the course of the next decade. During the war, many communities increased the amount of time their schools devoted to physical education, military training, domestic science, and hygiene programs. R.O.T.C. and Red Cross projects were often organized in schools, with the military and volunteer associations providing instruction and most of the supplies, uniforms, and weapons. Communities supported these health programs because of the public's perception of large numbers of unfit youth, a product of reports of high rates of military disability. Most physical education programs, which were usually voluntary and no more organized or demanding than recess games, were obviously inadequate. The health of the nation's children, and implicitly the ability of the United States to conduct a war, depended upon rigorous exercise and nutritious meals, both of which could be delivered almost universally through the schools. Health and physical education programs had requirements imposed and standardized during and immediately after the war. Similarly, domestic science curricula expanded to include first aid, nursing, and efficient shopping and cooking practices. [16]

Several educational and philanthropic ventures launched in the early 1920s focused the public's attention on the schools as appropriate institutions for the delivery of social services to children and youth. The mental hygiene movement in general, and the visiting teacher and guidance clinic experiments funded by the Commonwealth Fund and the Laura Spelman

Rockefeller Memorial Foundation specifically, contributed to the momentum building to use schools to prevent delinquency and shape or control deviant behavior of all kinds through non-academic programs. Throughout the 1920s, and even into the 1930s, these sponsors directed their resources toward the prevention of social and emotional maladjustment by establishing pilot projects and clinics in an array of communities, from small rural districts to diverse urban centers. Although their direct impact was modest at best -- because most communities refused to sustain the projects after the external funding was withdrawn -- they did leave at least two important legacies. To complement the pilot projects, the philanthropies encouraged the training of social service staff, particularly as visiting teachers, counselors, and parent education specialists, by supporting graduate and professional school centers in several cities. In addition, the widespread publicity surrounding the projects stimulated the professionalization of the core social service fields. For decades school social workers, for example, would look back upon the Commonwealth Fund placements and clinics, and the important empirical work conducted by staff members associated with the projects, as the pivotal phase in the development of their professional identity, even though a number of cities had been employing visiting teachers since the turn of the century.[17]

Finally, changes in school enrollment strongly influenced the scope and pattern of social service delivery during the decade following World War I. As the holding power of the schools increased during the 1920s, enrollments mushroomed. If prevailing social service staff/student ratios had just remained constant, the number of providers would have increased steadily. Because many of the students who began or remained in school after the war came from families and neighborhoods strained under the pressures of urban life and poverty, however, many communities recognized that an increase in their social service investment appeared justified. Consequently, both the total numbers and the proportion of non-academic social service personnel rose during the 1920s.

The experience of the four communities in Illinois suggests the striking changes in investment that occurred after World War I. In Evanston, the number of non-academic personnel grew from five in 1915 to 30 by 1931, and the ratio of social service to total professional staff doubled from twelve to 25 percent. In smaller, working-class Blue Island, the number increased from four to ten during the same period, as the proportion jumped dramatically from one-third to 46 percent (a figure that reflected the expansion of practical and domestic arts teachers). Similarly, in Waukegan, the number of professional staff associated with the social services and service curricula grew from five to 42 on the eve of the Depression, which represented a doubling of the proportion of such personnel from 22 to 45 percent. Comparable staff figures are not available for Chicago, but district expenditures reveal a parallel pattern. The practical and domestic arts budget increased ten fold during the 1920s. Costs associated with running the districts "special" schools for maladjusted youth rose quickly from $100,000 in 1915 to nearly $600,000 in 1931. Social center and related recreational services, on which virtually nothing was spent in 1915, consumed about $1 million by the end of the 1920s. The number of social workers, psychologists, child study experts, and health officers grew far faster than the overall professional instructional staff, which tripled over the decade following the war. [18]

Despite the apparent strength of the expansion of the social services movement during the 1920s, the position and security of most programs in the vast majority of districts were so weak that they could not withstand the pressure to curtail non-essential activities that accompanied the Depression of the 1930s. Investment ratios in the social service fields which had improved steadily over the 1920s suddenly worsened during the 1930s. Commitment to delivering social services through the schools was apparently more fragile than the staffing and funding figures of the 1920s implied. Reductions during the Depression reflected not simply the elimination of titles or de-specialization of services as responsibilities were transferred to other educational personnel. Instead, public school and municipal authorities in most communities attempted to have private and public non-educational agencies perform the social welfare, counseling, recreation, and health services that were being curtailed by their schools.

Most tellingly, in spite of the theoretical benefits of a broad program of social welfare and vocational adjustment services during a period of intense social turmoil, occupational displacement, poverty, delinquency, and alienation, traditional academic curricular fields were protected far more successfully than were the auxiliary services. In general, the recently appended ancillary services were sacrificed to protect the interests of the regular classroom teachers. The experiences of Chicago and Blue Island illustrate this response to the financial contraction imposed by the Depression.

On July 12, 1933, the Chicago public school system was "disemboweled," according to one prominent journalist, when the Board of Education, after two years of gradually reducing the district's social services, voted to restore fiscal order to Chicago by, among other things: eliminating the visiting teacher and special investigator program; abolishing the guidance bureau; closing the Parental School for maladjusted children; eliminating all but one continuation school; trimming the child study staff by 50 percent; dismissing all elementary physical education, manual training, and household arts teachers; and cutting the high school physical education program in half. [19]

Pressure for such a reduction had been building for several years, as a disputed tax assessment in Cook County had impeded the collection of property taxes and a "Citizens' Committee on Public Expenditures" was demanding a considerable cut in the schools' levy. The problems imposed by the financial cuts were compounded by a sharp increase in the high school population, which more than doubled between 1926 and 1932. Since the district's teaching staff grew half as fast as enrollment, personnel resources were quickly stretched to limit to cover instruction in the basic academic subjects. The Committee spoke constantly of preserving only the "common schools," and obviously intended to "reduce public education in Chicago to the 'three R's.'" [20] The Board of Education joined the Committee in trying to convince the public that the proposed cuts were the only alternative to closing the public schools entirely. The district had "accumulated many so-called 'fads and frills' or 'extra-curricular' activities and embellishments," the Board claimed. Among other extravagances, "social service activities were carried on by visiting teachers, truant officers, et cetera, with overlapping authority and duplication of activities, not only in the schools but also outside of the schools with Social Service Agencies, maintained by other branches of the Government." Many of the system's special programs and services were too costly, and benefited too few individuals to warrant their continued expensive operation. All in all, the Board concluded, "there were many activities in the schools which under more prosperous conditions would be useful and desirable, but which because of existing financial conditions required reduction to a minimum or elimination, at least for the present." [21]

Rather than allow the schools to close, or force the taxpayers to support a bloated program of services and activities, or cut expenses across the board, selective reductions were thought preferable. "There has been no curtailment of educational activity," argued the Board. The "tool" subjects (reading, writing, mathematics) were retained. Instruction in the "cultural subjects" (literature, history, art, music, science, languages) was not reduced. Although reorganized, physical training was continued. The important vocational programs were preserved. Lunch rooms, bathhouses, and playgrounds were to be continued in neighborhoods that needed them. Those special teachers and service providers who could be retrained to conduct regular academic classes would be rehired as quickly as possible, with their tenure rights and pensions unimpaired. [22]

The local and national educational communities were outraged by the curtailment of many ancillary social services. Teachers in Chicago echoed the comments of George Zook, U.S. Commissioner of Education, who observed that these events constituted "an amazing return to the dark ages," in the "opposite direction" from work being undertaken "by intelligent educators everywhere." Professor Charles Judd of the University of Chicago and author of the chapter on education in President Hoover's massive study of *Recent Social Trends in the United States,* warned an audience of 25,000 teachers and their supporters that "if the city of Chicago cannot ward off this blow which has been aimed at its future, then the disaster which threatens us will become a menace to the nation." If the spirit of democracy could be so easily destroyed in Chicago, he concluded, every city and town will be forced by "reactionaries to reduce the school program to instruction in rudimentary subjects." Other educators agreed, and challenged the citizens to avoid returning to "the bare bones of schooling." John Brewer of Harvard, an early leader of the guidance movement, threatened that "just as the Chicago gangs have overflowed upon other territory, so many of the pupils now to be denied an education will later flow into other cities and states" to damage their economies and undermine their social stability.[23]

Even though local social service leaders from inside the schools and from the city's many private agencies joined the educators in expressing their deep fears about the consequences of enacting the proposed cuts, their words had no impact on the Board. The reductions went into effect in the Fall of 1933. Except for a brief infusion of external funds from the federal and state governments (which helped Chicago to establish the nation's first driver education program in 1936), the retrenchment policies enacted by the Board continued to limit the effort to deliver social services through the schools.

Despite the teachers' claims of a conspiracy between the Board and the business community to restrain public expenditures, it appears as though Chicago's mass of taxpayers supported the curtailment of programs that most agreed served relatively few children. And many of the students who benefited most from the auxiliary services were from among the weakest, most disorganized elements of the city. Tax paying parents of parochial school students (who consisted on about one third of the city's children), consistently pressed for the retrenchment of the public school system, since they hated paying twice for their children's education. The public school services to which students from the Catholic schools were entitled were left relatively intact, such as the attendance department. Although they were able to get 350,000 signatures on a petition challenging the Board's decisions, Chicago's teachers were unable to marshal sufficient support among the general public to reverse the thrust of the plan to retrench the social services while expanding core academic instruction.

This interpretation is reinforced and clarified by reconstructing the experience of Blue Island during the Depression, a community in which there was no suggestion of a business conspiracy such as that which obscured the character of the public's vision of Chicago's schools. The economic collapse that confronted the nation in general, and the peculiar financial problems associated with the Cook County tax collection fiasco of the early 1930s, severely aggravated conditions in Blue Island, already one of northeastern Illinois' poorest communities. Compounding the fiscal difficulties prevalent in the area were Blue Island's responsibility for educating the children of nearby Robbins, an impoverished black community which included a large percentage of families unable to pay any taxes, and the existence of a large number of cemeteries which had been withdrawn from the tax rolls. Reflecting the national pattern, high school enrollment doubled between 1928 and 1932, and increased another 50 percent to 1400 by 1939. The school's faculty did not increase at all until 1936, and then annual additions never kept pace with rising enrollments. This explosive expansion, combined with one of the area's weakest tax bases, caused instructional expenditures to drop sharply from $120 per student on the eve of the Depression to approximately $50 by the mid-1930s. Blue Island's economic and personnel resources were stretched to the limit. [24]

The burden of responding to the deteriorating financial condition was not spread evenly over all programs, but were concentrated on the social services and associated curricular fields. The pure services were discontinued, and the social service, physical education, and practical arts curricula were severely curtailed. The special rooms were converted to regular classroom use. In 1936 the state visitor was concerned about Blue Island's selective response, and was particularly disturbed that "much of the non-academic work" had been dropped early in the Depression. The district's superintendent complained that financial pressures were "stupendous," and he could not see a way of restoring the programs when he had to keep the schools open for a year on six months' worth of income. The following year the state's indictment was even more scathing. The students' scholarship, he argued, was far poorer than it should have been, attributable, he maintained, to the "unsuitability of the present rather narrow, traditional curriculum." The course of study offered in this working-class community was "entirely traditional, academic, and college preparatory," even though one in eight graduates went on to college. He was flabbergasted. "Why should a school teach Latin, German, and French each for three or four years, ancient history, and advanced mathematics, when it is greatly indebted, and at the same time provides no work in shop, household arts, and fine arts, and curtailed courses in commerce, physical education, and remedial reading," was unjustifiable. What would happen to the 85 percent who did not go on to college? The very work that Blue Island stopped, he argued, should have been increased during the 1930s, and "many of the college preparatory courses eliminated entirely or shortened." He recommended that Blue Island restore the programs it had curtailed and establish an array of health, counseling, and social services for the children of the town's working-class families. [25]

Although levies continued to fail, and the state visitor returned the following year to raise similar objections to the superintendent's policies, it was learned that the district had not only refused to expand the service sector, but had actually expanded the academic curriculum by adding several new classes in the foreign languages and mathematics. The annual criticisms began to have a small, but evident affect on Blue Island: by the Depression's end commercial classes were slowly added, and new facilities were constructed. By 1941 Blue Island high school was offering six credits annually in commercial classes, a half-credit in hygiene, and two credits in home economics. In that same year, nevertheless, it offered twelve credits in foreign languages, six in science, seven in the social sciences, and four in mathematics. [26]

These events illustrate the complexity of interests and aspirations that were shaping public educational investments at the time, and particularly the continuing struggle to secure the place of the social services in the schools. Blue Island's case reveals the ability of the entrenched academic faculty to protect their subject matter interests, despite the minuscule attention given to the core disciplines in the *Cardinal Principles.* Most employees in the non-academic and social service programs had joined the system relatively recently, at least in contrast to the basic academic faculty. It was relatively easy to terminate the recently-hired, least defensible elements of the staff when the public was not vocally and visibly enthusiastic about the social services.

These events also reveal the residual appeal of the classical model of secondary education in a working-class community, a model that was sustained by an established, predominately classically-trained faculty and administration engaged in fueling the community's aspirations for a college preparatory curriculum even though fewer than one graduate in eight actually attended college.

The Blue Island and Chicago experiences also illustrate the extent to which the process of professional takeover of the social service movement was irregular, haphazard, and riddled with intra-group competition and conflict. For example, the state visitors, representing the progressive expansion of professional hegemony over the social welfare of the public, used what few resources they possessed to encourage local citizens to rely on their educational institutions for ever more social services. They encountered pockets of resistance from citizens still disturbed by the intervention of schools into concerns and privileges traditionally beyond the prerogative of the schools, and by entrenched classical academic teaching staffs committed to preserving their fields from the steady encroachment of the social service personnel.

Social services were not reduced or eliminated everywhere. The case of Evanston reveals first, that access to services depended in part on one's social class and economic status, and second, that social service providers were beginning to redefine "need" in such a way as to justify and legitimize their efforts in even privileged communities. During the Depression Evanston expanded its social service and practical arts programs, despite a financial crisis without precedent in the community's history, even though it was not nearly as severe as the fiscal collapse experienced in Chicago, Blue Island, or most other towns in the United States. With the Cook County tax problems compounded by rising enrollments, per-pupil instructional allocations fell from $170 to $110 between 1932 and 1935, before climbing back to $140 by 1939. The superintendent protected instructional and social service programs during the Depression by cutting back capital improvement projects and trimming teachers' salaries by a total of 30 percent over four years. [27]

Superintendent Francis Bacon defended symmetrical reductions in the face of citizens who called for the elimination of targeted programs, such as those in health and physical education, which they believed were expensive to maintain. Bacon claimed that not only were these fields among the cheapest to staff (costing only $11.56 per pupil per year, compared to the

Greek department, which cost $113.33 per student), but even if health and physical education had been more costly he would have done everything possible to retain them because they were considered "by the best educational authorities" to be "the most important of educational activities." The overall educational program was already too narrow, he argued, especially in the social service curricular areas, which he called "unusually meager." Visitors found that Evanston was "woefully lacking in many of the modern school subjects," which Bacon maintained included the practical arts, health, and safety education. A curriculum designed exclusively for the "professional classes has not satisfied the needs and abilities of all the children of all the people." A "truly democratic school will not exist until there is suitable education for all youth," Bacon stated. At a time when this middle and professional class community was witnessing an upsurge in juvenile delinquency, the superintendent was disinclined to selectively cut the vital social service and related non-academic curricula in which Evanston had just recently begun to invest. 28

As a self-consciously "progressive" school district, Evanston possessed an unfaltering commitment to serving the individual interests of all of its children. And as an affluent community, it had the wealth to expand its programs and services to address the needs of an increasingly diverse student body.

The expansion of social services during the 1930s in communities like Evanston also illustrates a considerable change in thinking about the causes of social problems facing children, and the role of school-based social services in their prevention or remediation. Beginning in the late 1920s, professional social service providers associated with a variety of public and private agencies, including school-based social and mental health workers, cooperated in popularizing new concepts and definitions of the causes of delinquency and maladjustment. Briefly, they articulated and promoted the notion that such problems of youth were only rarely caused by common forms of environmental deprivation or hereditary deficiencies. They rejected both of these traditional explanations of human misery and substituted the concept that successful personal adjustment was a complex, life-long process requiring the continual attention and intervention of the helping professions. Fundamental and ineradicable tensions endemic to modern society and family life produced stresses that surfaced in their most acute form during adolescence. Successful adjustment depended upon regular evaluations, counseling, and social work supervision.

Social welfare professionals capitalized on these concepts by moving to expand the market for their services. They took advantage of the unprecedented and massive contributions of state and federal public agencies in providing relief assistance to the poor and unemployed during the Depression to reorient many agencies toward serving *middle-class* families and the attendant long-term, complicated process of individual psychological and emotional adjustment. The mental hygiene movement, a strong influence on the evolution of social work during the 1920s, stressed the opportunity of the helping professions to prevent potential behavior and maladjustment problems by identifying "nervous," "anxious," and "emotionally disturbed" children through scientific testing, and treating them individually in therapy-oriented clinics.

Simultaneously, school-based social workers and counselors turned from their initial role as advocates for the improvement of children's environmental conditions to more "professional" preoccupations, such as individual psychological casework and testing. Historically, school social workers had been closely identified with coercive attendance, truancy, and delinquency services; they dealt primarily with the most visible and discouraging behavior problems, most of which were rooted in poverty and violence. During the 1930s, they reoriented their role to serving all children, and successfully penetrated markets in affluent and professional communities to disassociate themselves from the stigma of exclusive association with the impoverished, criminal, and otherwise most intractable problem youth. [29]

Progress was steady but slow during the 1930s and 1940s, in large part because many unsuspecting members of the middle class needed to be convinced that they suffered from serious emotional problems of the sort that warranted prolonged professional attention. This task was aided by the appearance of several national policy studies that examined the condition of children and youth and the potential for school-based social services to counteract growth in delinquency, primarily in the larger cities, but disturbingly among middle-class adolescents. One of the most important studies was conducted by the N.E.A.'s Educational Policy Commission, which released its final report, *Social Services and the Schools*, in 1939. In one of the most comprehensive statements of the responsibilities of public education ever published, the report concluded that all library, recreational, and health services be unified under the local board of education, and that school personnel coordinate the delivery of social welfare (relief) programs, even though "the material wants of indigent school children" would actually be supplied by other private and public agencies. The report also called for schools to accept responsibility for providing mental health and a full complement of guidance, counseling, and occupational adjustment services for all children. [30]

The American Council of Education's American Youth Commission issued its report on *Youth and the Future* in 1942, another document that strengthened the campaign to expand school-based social services to all children. Built on a restatement of the Cardinal Principles, released as the A.C.E.'s *What the High School Ought to Teach* (1940), the Commission challenged America's schools to prepare youth to confront and resolve personal problems and vocational maladjustment, as well as to read and develop a civic consciousness. The Commission expressed concern over the "tattered remnants" of the classical academic curriculum, but concluded that in practice, these studies tended to serve no greater purpose than "to provide mental furniture for the members of the professional and leisure classes." [31]

Fueled by such rhetoric, school-based counselors and social workers joined their professional counterparts associated with state departments of education after World War II in lobbying legislatures to invest in psychological and counseling services in public schools, particularly in the highly desirable, explosive suburban markets, where the psychological model exposed a vast reservoir of middle-class adolescent problems. With direct financial assistance from the state of Illinois for the identification and treatment of emotionally disturbed children, for example, Evanston increased its staff of social workers from one in 1950 to five in 1960, a pace that dwarfed the expansion in enrollment. As "truancy" became transformed into "school phobia" by the late 1950s, it is clear that the social work community had completed the shift from their earlier advocacy focus on external, environmental conditions in urban communities and the troubled poor to a clinical orientation dedicated to easing the emotional adjustment of introspective, suburban children.[32]

Building on the successful lobbying efforts of the social workers and counselors, the social service movement in general capitalized on a number of circumstances after World War II to revitalize their fields, which continued to languish because of the Depression. Safety programs and courses were brought together and expanded during the 1940s and 1950s because of changes in state school codes that mandated school-based driver education and classes in safety education. Such mandates owed much to the lobbying efforts of the American Association of School Administrators, which devoted their 1940 yearbook to the subject of safety education. The movement spread rapidly. Nationally the number of schools offering classroom instruction in driving in the decade after Chicago and Evanston began conducting their classes in 1937, in order to combat the "sinister threat of the automobile in fatalities and accidents." By 1947 four out of five Wisconsin high schools provided driver education. North Dakota required all high school students to pass an examination in the subject before graduation.[33]

Similarly, health and physical education programs were strengthened by state mandates to raise participation standards, in Illinois, for example, to 200 minutes per week, spread over three or four days. Medical inspections were made mandatory. Credit for much of the legislation was given to state-level physical education associations. In Illinois, the state association helped to prepare a pamphlet for school administrators and board members to understand what their responsibilities were to support their students' physical health. One result of the activity was a sharp rise in the number and proportion of physical education teachers (student/teacher ratios in this field fell from 400:1 to 250:1) and health personnel in general, as many districts hired nurses and placed physicians and other medical specialists on retainer for the first time.

And, of course, the most visible effort reflecting the expansion of public investment in non-academic services was the federally-funded school lunch program, which survived a grisly legislative controversy to be enacted in 1946. The U.S. government had been donating surplus agricultural produce to schools since the mid-1930s. By 1944 several representatives pushed an appropriations bill that would have contributed federal revenue directly to schools to augment the surplus food. This initiative sparked an intense controversy, however, and raised fundamental questions about the legitimacy of public schools providing social and health services to their students. Although little opposition to feeding "needy children" was apparent in the vigorous debate over the proposed legislation, a number of senators attacked the lunch bill, principally on the grounds that it was not a proper federal function, and because the bill's supporters had "drawn a false picture of under nourishment in the schools." If the federal government is to feed school children, objected Senator Robert Taft (R., Ohio), "we might as well give every school child a pair of shoes." Representative Bushfield (R., S. Dakota) reminded his colleagues that the lunches were never intended to relieve hunger problems, but were originally supported to "get rid of surplus farm products and hire W.P.A. labor." With these reservations in mind, nevertheless, both the Senate and House were willing to continue the food subsidy program as a "temporary war measure" for two more years. [34]

In late February, 1946, Representative Flannagan (D., Virginia), calmly introduced a measure to appropriate $65 million for subsidized lunches, launching what was remembered as one of the most "hectic" periods of debate in congressional history. Flannagan made his intent simple: to make the federal lunch contribution permanent by providing matching funds to the states to subsidize nutritional lunches for needy students. [35]

The discussion that followed Flannagan's measure was not at all calm. Supporters of the bill demanded permanent relief for hunger in America, and applauded the federal lunch program as an appropriate tool with which to begin to approach this objective. A flood of postcards, purportedly written by children, carrying such pleas as "Don't take my lunch away from me!" began to swamp the legislators. One representative recalled Commerce Secretary Wallace's comment that "the pigs in Iowa were better fed than a large proportion of the children in Washington." Debate, originally scheduled to last two hours, consumed three days. The opposition denounced the bill, claiming that the establishment of a federal lunch program was the first step in a campaign to make all children "wards of the state." The most vociferous exchanges accompanied Representative Adam Clayton Powell's (D. New York) amendment which forbade discrimination on the basis of race, color, or creed. Southern Democrats saw "Communist Dynamite" in Powell's brief amendment, noted one influential newspaper, since Powell was generally assumed to be a "protégé of the *New York Daily Worker*," an official communist paper. Enraged by the implications for their region, the Southerners threatened to form a bipartisan coalition with Republicans, critical of the federal effort, to defeat the bill.[36]

They were unsuccessful. On February 21, 1946, the House approved the appropriations bill by a vote of 276 to 101, thereby sending it to the Senate. After some controversy and slight revision, the Senate approved the legislation and sent it on for President Truman's signature. On June 4, 1946 the National School Lunch Act became Public Law 396. Powell's amendment was itself amended to force states to spend their funds equally on children of all races, but continued to permit them to spend the funds in racially separate schools.[37]

Although the federal (and state) lunch programs encountered continual criticism throughout the 1940s and 1950s, they expanded rapidly. By 1957, for example, applications for reimbursement for subsidized lunches were submitted by more than 1200 separate institutions in Cook County alone, including public and parochial schools, and local community child care organizations and neighborhood councils.[38]

By the end of the 1950s, consequently, social service efforts were thriving. Relative enrollment stability and generally good financial conditions, coupled with increasingly aggressive professional lobbying, stimulated demand in communities which had never felt much need to invest public school resources in providing health and social services to their children.

Social Services and the Disadvantaged, 1960-1986: The Impact of Federal Policy and the Practice of Neutrality

The momentum behind the expansion of the social service movement so visible during the late 1940s and 1950s continued through the 1960s and early 1970s. Following enrollment trends, staffing in many social service fields began to decline slightly after 1974. Total revenues available to most districts increased in parallel with enrollment growth. Sources of revenue began to change, however, as the share raised through local property taxes declined and the share derived through direct targeted aid from the state and federal governments increased. A portion of the growth of state funding (through income, sales, and vice taxes) was attributable to equalization initiatives that attempted to reduce differences in per pupil expenditures across districts. But much of the state and federal share was dedicated to specific programs, intended for targeted student populations. Many such programs were created to provide compensatory aid for disadvantaged children, often in the form of additional services for needy and exceptional students.

As a result, communities of all kinds created or expanded their social service programs. In Blue Island, for example, the number of counselors tripled from seven to 23 between the early 1960s and the early 1970s; the number of health professionals increased from two to eleven. Comparable growth in staff occurred in Evanston and Waukegan as well. In Chicago the professional social work staff, which began to be rebuilt in the 1950s and consisted of only two members in 1958, grew gradually to nine in 1964, after which it exploded to 133 by 1975. The truant officer force expanded from 177 to 250 during the 1960s. Expenditures on all attendance services rose from $750,000 during the late 1950s, to $3.3 million by the early 1970s. Total annual costs of the recreational and social center programs jumped from $2 million to $ 7 million between 1960 and 1972. During the late 1960s Chicago began to operate several "family living centers" for pregnant adolescents, at an annual cost of $1 million. The system's other special schools for delinquent and maladjusted children nearly tripled in cost to $5 million over the decade of the 1960s. Despite such dramatic growth, the proportion of educational expenditures devoted to the social service fields remained relatively stable during the 1960s and 1970s, largely because the entire educational enterprise grew so enormously, and because the regular academic fields sustained their efforts to retain their share of the school budget. Indeed, because so much of the expansion in social services was stimulated by "new" external money from the federal and state governments, the core academic fields actually increased their share of the "old" traditionally-funded instructional budget slightly. [39]

The social service experience of the decades after 1960 reflect at least one persistent theme and several new ones. In part the compelling issues of this period were rooted in changes in the funding of services and the impact of federal policy. In part they were shaped by important changes in the helping professions.

In contrast with the efforts of the 1950s to "universalize" services by expanding markets to include middle-class and affluent students, many leaders of the initiatives of the 1960s were determined to redirect their focus on disadvantaged populations. Many of the new thrusts, therefore, were cast as mechanisms for removing the barriers to learning that confronted children of the poor, or those who suffered racial or economic discrimination. Advocates believed that the problems facing such children were largely material, and relatively more easily identifiable than the widespread psychological maladjustment thought to be prevalent during the early 1950s. Their response focused on improving the economic conditions of the poor through employment training, work-study and counseling programs; nutrition experiments that included provisions for breakfast in addition to free or subsidized lunches; and improved health services.

State funds intended to address problems of maladjustment, combined with revenue from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) and contributions from businesses and private agencies, underwrote a vast array of imposing new programs dedicated to reducing truancy, recovering dropouts, and ensuring efficient vocational training and placement for urban minorities and working-class white youth. Investments in these new programs for the disadvantaged was fundamentally fueled and shaped by federal education, job training, social welfare, and health spending, particularly that associated with manpower development (1962) and vocational education (1963) legislation, and the anti-poverty components of the ESEA. The funds were typically earmarked for specific groups of targeted children, and the lengthy list of projects supported with ESEA or Model Cities revenues undertaken by many school districts after 1965 reflects the social service movement's changed ambitions and concerns.

The schools became preoccupied using federal funds for attacking problems of truancy and non-attendance in particular. Once schools began to enroll the vast majority of children and youth, it became possible to define those unwilling to attend as "deviant." It became increasingly "normal" to graduate from high school, and those who refused could be targeted for attention. And since it became increasingly common for school revenues to be tied to some sort of measure of average daily attendance, administrators had a strong financial incentive to establish programs to keep adolescents in school.

The fashion in which many social service programs were introduced, particularly those initiated or expanded through state and federal mandate, left a legacy of administrative and financial problems for many districts. Although school systems graciously received programs that were accompanied by state and federal reimbursement funds during the 1960s and 1970s, administrators and school board members found that the levels of external support only rarely kept pace with the costs of delivering the services. They became highly critical of being forced to provide social programs under legislative mandate without the financial assistance to cover all of their direct and administrative expenses.

This has led to an unprecedented withdrawal of many educational administrators as a constituency that has historically been vocally committed to preserving and expanding non-academic social services. Once enthusiastic about the opportunities inherent in the expansion of their schools' function to include the delivery of social services, administrators began to cringe under the financial burdens accompanying the maintenance of programs which are constantly attacked as diversionary, wasteful, subversive, ineffectual, or even illegitimate.

Despite the growth of social service investments during the 1960s and 1970s, there seems to have been little intention to fully integrating most of the programs. As long as external funding was available, experimental projects flourished, but to protect themselves wherever possible, boards of education refused to make them permanent. Once external funds diminished or enrollments declined, many services and non-academic programs were curtailed. Part of the attractiveness of some of the initially well-funded programs was that they could be established without significant capital investment and therefore could be dismantled as funding declined. Such arrangements made it relatively painless to eliminate personnel who existed largely on the periphery of the schools, and often averted confrontations with school employee unions.

In addition, financial support for social services during the 1960s and 1970s, particularly federal anti-poverty aid, encouraged the development of different forms of professional relationships, including an intriguing inversion of the prevailing historical pattern of professional dominance. Federal policy deepened an anti-professional ethos that had evolved from cultural observers like Paul Goodman and community organizers like Saul Alinsky, who stressed the value of local self-determination. For a variety of reasons, public policy during the Kennedy and Johnson administrations emphasized the importance of enhancing the authority, responsibility, and role of "para-professionals," non-professionals, and clients: the "maximum feasible participation" of the recipients of social services. The movement was determined to "empower" service recipients by demystifying expertise and undermining professional hegemony by placing the poor and racial minorities in positions of autonomy and authority in the administration of many federally-funded programs.

This movement influenced the delivery of school-based services in several ways. In order to get funds, boards of education had to demonstrate that parental or "community" interests were represented, an obligation that usually resulted in the formation of community councils that advised school administrators on local and neighborhood matters. More directly, however, projects were often initiated that attempted to draw heavily upon non-certified, indigenous personnel, individuals assumed to be in a better position to establish rapport with disaffected students than were tenured, white, middle-class professionals. Such funding arrangements, consequently, were occasionally used to circumvent local professional social service providers.

The results were riddled with tension, jealousies, and suspicion. Scholars have demonstrated that success on the part of indigenous non-professionals threatened the legitimacy of existing public institutions. They have provided a number of examples of educational and social welfare professionals and municipal authorities attempting to undermine the efforts of community leaders and non-certified personnel. Occasionally the conflicting interests were brought into relief by the movement to organize social services through purchase of service contracts or other forms of cooperative agreements with private agencies or individuals. This pattern of cooperation has been common in most urban communities since the late 1890s. As long as regular school resources were not depleted, few administrators resisted, and indeed often welcomed the participation of community groups, especially if they brought outside funding. [40]

Social service professionals assigned either to individual schools or to central pupil service bureaus, however, have been less receptive to this arrangement. Chicago's experience during the late 1960s and 1970s with one private counseling and social work agency in particular, Youth Guidance, illustrates the troubling issues inherent in organizing competing social service programs under the guise of promoting cooperation. Youth Guidance was founded in 1924 as the Church Mission of Help, an evangelical social service agency for unwed mothers and young women in danger of moral corruption. During the 1950s the staff diversified their efforts by introducing counseling programs for young men and women, and occasionally operated on the periphery of the schools. In cooperation with the Board of Education, Youth Guidance established Project Step-Up in 1969, and effort to prevent delinquency among students by providing intensive social work and counseling services in several schools characterized by disruptive behavioral problems, uncommonly high truancy and dropout rates, a demoralizing number of under-achievers, and predominately minority student bodies. [41]

Youth Guidance moved quickly to recruit African-American and Hispanic counselors so that a comfortable rapport could be established with the alienated students, something which the middle-class, white social workers and guidance personnel had presumably found difficult. Within a short time Youth Guidance came to devote virtually all of its efforts to the lucrative public school program. Participating schools made space available to the agency's teams, who worked with students referred by classroom teachers or administrators. Convinced of the program's success with students, various public and private sources, including particularly the United Way of Metropolitan Chicago and the state's Department of Human Services, underwrote the agency's expansion over the next dozen years.

Shortly after Youth Guidance officially entered the schools, however, tensions developed between the certified social workers employed by the Chicago public schools and the agency's young field workers, who the system's professionals occasionally criticized as "street people." The professional staff feared that the Youth Guidance workers would inevitably "over-identify" with the demanding, disruptive students, and subvert whatever respectability and legitimacy had been achieved in the troubled targeted schools. They were genuinely concerned that the young workers would be "taken in" by the manipulative students. Familiarity with such erosion of control led the certified social workers to emphasize the importance of appropriate professional education and experience.

As resources for such services diminished after 1972, competition between the two groups intensified. Although the district's superintendent made it clear that Youth Guidance could not receive direct financial payments from the Board of Education -- forcing it to develop other sources of income -- the system's social service professionals were convinced that the continued presence of the agency threatened their hard-won, but still fragile employment security. As long as the Board could rely on Youth Guidance, and other agency, personnel, who were virtually "free," the system's staff worried about the district's commitment to maintaining a large, permanent force of professionals, a sentiment that was aggravated by the dismissal or reassignment of several hundred social service personnel after 1972. Although the presence of the Youth Guidance workers in many respects validated the role of the school social workers, the professional staff was disturbed by the implications of cost differentials between the two programs. Youth Guidance served each of its clients for approximately $200 annually. Special projects initiated by the Board with regular staff similar to those undertaken by Youth Guidance often cost thousands of dollars per student served. A substantial portion of such program expenses, however, reflected essentially administrative or bureaucratic cost, a fact that distressed many of the school social workers who worried that the public assumed that they could not compete on a cost basis with private agencies on purchase of service contracts or federal grants.

Exacerbating the tension over competing for scarce resources and job security, the Youth Guidance experience revealed a conflict over the changing nature of the "pure" social services delivered through the schools. Professional social workers and counselors employed by the school system came to believe that the character of their work had been redefined, diminished through a radical transformation since the late 1960s. Outside funding was accompanied by stiff bureaucratic requirements that have forced the system's professionals to devote their time not to service delivery but to the flow of paperwork and administrative detail that consistently threatened to consume them. They began to feel that their therapeutic expertise was increasing directed toward diagnostic and referral tasks. Many became jealous of the "hands on" services that the paraprofessionals and Youth Guidance staff were customarily allowed to perform, and resented the relative independence afforded to community workers and project counselors.

Because of such competition and resentment, many of Chicago's professionals resisted the extension of institutionalized "cooperative," joint ventures with private agencies. One director of social work for the schools, for example, used his authority over an internship program to deny stipends to Youth Guidance staff who were working in the Chicago system. At one time at least 20 positions were left unfilled when they could have been made available to students enrolled at local social work schools who wanted to gain experience with the Youth Guidance program. Professional school social workers also lobbied at the state to have certification requirements tightened to the point of denying Youth Guidance staff who were not trained specifically in "school social work" the opportunity to work with students in a school setting. They pursued these objectives in a effort to consolidate control over every component of the school's social service delivery system under public authority, to reduce or eliminate the opportunity of the private agencies to develop competing programs.

The transformation of another group of social service programs -- those intended for pregnant adolescents -- illustrates a final set of issues that continue to affect educational policy and practice. Over the past two decades or so many helping professionals associated with educational institutions have intentionally adopted an ethos of neutrality and techniques of therapy that have not challenged destructive youthful behavior and have made it difficult for students seeking service to make fully informed decisions about their lives (or the lives of those around them in many cases). Such a transformation can be readily explored by reconstructing the recent history of programs for unwed mothers.

Until the mid-1960s the private sector -- through maternity homes, "erring women's refuges," and evangelical Christian organizations -- provided virtually all of the services that were typically available to pregnant adolescents. Established as part of the urban charities movement of the late nineteenth century, institutions serving "wayward girls," as they were often called, intentionally employed a strategy of enforced motherhood (by forcing pregnant adolescents to retain custody of their out-of-wedlock infants) as a therapeutic strategy of rehabilitation. By 1870 virtually all of the homes and shelters enforced strict rules against permitting young women to place their babies up for adoption. Supervisors were convinced that nurturing the maternal bond was one of the most potent methods of guaranteeing that the women would conduct themselves responsibly and avoid relapses once released from the homes. The trustee's of Chicago's Erring Woman's Refuge, for example, claimed that their anti-adoption policies resulted in striking "success" rates in excess of 90 percent (fewer than 10 percent delivered another child out-of-wedlock). The staff attributed the stability that the women had achieved in their lives to the "sacredness of maternity, the sense of obligation to helpless infancy, the clinging arms around the mother's neck, the lisping of the sweetest name to childhood -- mama," which developed the best qualities in each resident's nature. One supervisor distributed a letter she had received from a former resident who claimed that her baby had given her a "purpose in life and keeps me good." During the 1920s, officials of Chicago's Florence Crittenton Anchorage accused local delivery hospitals of conspiring to steal their residents' newborn children and selling them into the sordid black-market baby system. [42]

As the industry professionalized between 1930 and the early 1960s, the institutions' approaches changed dramatically. Leadership of the movement shifted fairly rapidly as the federated charities organizations (predecessors of the United Way) forced local institutions to replace the religious volunteers who had run the homes for the previous half-century with professionally-trained social workers. The federated charities leaders pressed for this change relentlessly, and during the hard times of the Depression of the 1930s, the income raised through the Community Chests' consolidated giving campaigns proved to be so irresistible that organization after organization capitulated to the professionals' demands for staffs of psychiatrically-trained social workers with experience in the problems of emotionally disturbed adolescents.

The professional case workers who assumed control of the institutions by the 1940s confronted the rehabilitation programs common to the evangelistic homes and found them undesirable in virtually every respect. To the outgoing matrons, all of the residents were in the same situation, all had been unable to handle temptation in a Christian fashion, all had been seduced and abandoned by predatory men, and all simply needed to forget their past downfall and face the future with the confidence that both faith and motherhood would bring. In contrast, the professional social workers stressed individual, case-by-case evaluations and psychiatric profiles, intelligence tests, family studies, and offered a unique therapy for each woman. They substituted a medical, psychiatric model for the prevailing moral model. The homes were "not prisons for culprits, but shelters and schools for the crippled," argued one social worker; the young women were not admitted "because of their *sin*, but because of their *need*." [43]

The professionals subsequently launched an onslaught against the home's treatment strategies, particularly against the practice of forcing the residents to retain custody of their children. Enforced motherhood undermined whatever opportunities the women might ever have for further education or economic independence. It was essential for the residents to be unencumbered and able to relocate, impossible feats for adolescents who kept their babies. The changed attitude can be seen by contrasting the opinions of the director of the Crittenton

Anchorage. Just prior to the federated takeover, the outgoing matron insisted that "if the girls do not stay in the home [often for two to four years] and take responsibility for their babies they would be apt to return 'to their old haunts and habits' and it would be too easy for them to have another baby." The new director offered a fundamental reconceptualization in 1951 when she argued flatly that "the baby must be given in for adoption for [the] protection of himself and [the] mother." Retention records indicate that the Anchorage's policies were not simply rhetorical: before World War II, more than 80 percent of the young mothers had kept their children. By the early 1950s approximately 80 percent were released for adoption, almost all while the mothers were still in the hospital. [44]

As urban black unwed parenthood became increasingly visible during the late 1950s and early 1960s, and as young white women were less in need of residential maternity care because of public toleration of their condition, the private maternity homes began to loose business. As families had grown to see the maternity homes as adoption agencies, and as liberal views permitted the retention of children born out-of-wedlock, young women stopped turning to the residential, custodial, secretive institutions. Black youth rarely sought admission to maternity homes, since few institutions welcomed them, and it was assumed that there existed virtually no African-American adoption market. The softening of the maternity market during the 1960s caused most of the homes to close or to reorient their social work staff to serving adolescents with other emotional and health problems. [45]

In their place, the public schools began to establish programs for pregnant adolescents, a movement that was launched with direct funding from the federal government. Since the residential facilities were reluctant to serve minorities, and pregnancy was no longer seen as a problem requiring intensive isolated treatment out of the public's view, activists pressed to have community-based comprehensive care centers organized in public schools. The first, and most famous, was established at the Webster School in Washington, D.C. in 1963 with financial support from the Children's Bureau Welfare Research and Demonstration Grants Program. As obstacles to their expansion declined over the balance of the 1960s, the school-based comprehensive care centers (often called schools for girls with special needs, and funded with ESEA money after 1965)became the dominant model for serving pregnant adolescents. [46]

Most of the concern about the special schools has focused on the relatively weak educational programs that they typically offered, imbalanced as they were toward parenting and child care skills and away from regular academic classes in history, mathematics, science, and language arts, courses that would prepare them for higher education. Districts were caught in a variety of tensions. Parents rebelled at the notion of transferring the "mature" unwed mothers into regular classrooms, where they could "contaminate" the development of luckier adolescents. Few young women pressed for full academic integration, although several high profile court decisions won that right for young women in the early 1970s. And, as in the case of many other categories of "special" students, the pregnant young women were more "valuable" if they were isolated in their special programs. Ironically, the availability of external financial support made it easier for local school administrators to circumvent the public mandate to integrate the young women.

More recently another concern has emerged about the practices that are common to the comprehensive care centers for pregnant adolescents. Even a brief exposure to the operation of the facilities reveals the extent to which they quickly came to be based upon an assumption that the young participants will retain custody of their children. Many of their most prominent features try to minimize the young women's concerns about the burdens of retention, or stimulate and reinforce their fantasies about mothering. Many centers added child care services for students who delivered and tried to return to school or to locate employment. The nurseries have been staffed by pregnant adolescents participating in child care and parenting classes, and some have encouraged them to experience motherhood vicariously. Courses in family life education began to include components on family budgeting and to offer advice on establishing an independent household or acquiring public welfare funds as a single parent. [47]

Beyond attempting the laudable task of trying to improve the parenting of expectant adolescents, some individuals have called attention to the extent to which such admirable efforts may have contributed to the decision of young women to raise their children alone. Sincere and well-intentioned policies to protect innocent adolescents and children from the consequences of unfortunate behavior may have returned to exacerbate the serious problems of unwed motherhood for young women and their infants. Challenges have been brought against policies that might inadvertently increase the retention of children born out-of-wedlock while attempting to protect infant health.

Everyone agreed that public toleration of adolescent pregnancy and even unwed motherhood for teenagers had the greatest impact on the decisions of young women to retain custody of their babies while refusing to get married. Public policies made it less painful, or inversely more attractive, but general social tolerance was more important. But it has also been suggested that public policies and institutional practices have contributed inadvertently to the shift in behavior, and therefore merit some examination.

Complementing the coursework that the centers made available, most of them established group counseling sessions as the primary therapeutic strategy for working with the young women. Group counseling reinforces the impact of peer pressure. Indeed, it was introduced in order to take advantage of the role that the peer norm enforcement process played in shaping decisions and building self-esteem (which the helping professions had come to view as essential to the recovery of pregnant adolescents). By design, group or peer counseling programs for adolescents inevitably enforced conformity to the dominant posture of the group. When a young woman's values conflicted with those of a group established to strengthen her self-esteem, two remarkably candid social workers admitted in their defense of the therapy for pregnant adolescents, "she must change her values if she wants to be identified with the group." Only young women with extraordinary ego strength possessed the self-confidence to resist the "consolidated opinion of her peers." [48]

Unfortunately, by the late 1960s, adolescent opinion had begun to endorse retention aggressively, even outside of the intense, group counseling cauldron. Some leaders in the adoption field recognized this. One commentator recently noted that the young woman "who shares with friends that she is planning adoption may be subjected to unsolicited advice of how she should try to parent the child and suggestions that she is less than caring if she does not."[49]

Adoption, and later abortion, were choices rarely discussed in the counseling sessions. Group sessions encouraged both participants and the counselors and social workers who led them to pursue comforting, supportive sessions that mutually validated one another's experiences and aspirations without facing the tense, divisive, painful confrontations that would have invariably accompanied the discussion of unpopular or repugnant pregnancy resolution options such as relinquishment. Leaders were too often deluded into believing that they were professionally competent, when they were offered the *illusion* of success that was associated with eager participation, enthusiastic consensus, and smooth sessions. Everyone would have been seduced by the immediate counseling process into pursuing attractive immediate rewards while abandoning the opportunity to ensure that pivotal decisions were able to be based on a thorough understanding and appreciation of all of the potential costs of retention.[50]

If the helping professions had not abandoned their earlier commitment to relinquishment that had infused the homes of the 1940s and 1950s in favor of an ethos of neutrality -- a therapeutic strategy of non-intervention -- they might have been able to confront the intimidating peer group pressure in favor of retention. But they had adopted an intentionally neutral stance toward all forms of behavior which precluded standing against the thrust of peer pressure. It had become unacceptable to intervene in most client decisions. Issues were cleansed of their moral overtones. Problems, consequently, became technical. The professional community simply tried to make already-formed decisions as painless and inexpensive as possible. Leading social work leaders began to recognize the potential for great harm that this transformation made possible.[51]

The resulting delivery system retreated from controversy and confrontation in a variety of ways, far beyond the tendency to pursue smooth counseling sessions. Many of the programs were organizationally marginal, a fact of life that led staff members to avoid the sort of attention that challenging student preferences would have created. During the late 1970s and 1980s, when supplementary federal funds were in jeopardy, few center directors were committed enough to exposing all young women to the entire range of pregnancy resolution options to risk becoming embroiled in disputes that might rile an entire community. And as public acceptance of unwed motherhood among adolescents became even more widespread, young women became even less dependent on the care centers. The authority of service providers weakened relative to the power of young pregnant women. As the delivery system came to need the young women more than the pregnant adolescents believed that they needed the services, the providers became even more *passive,* afraid to jeopardize their diminishing market power. Fewer providers were willing to risk alienating prospective clients by imposing or even mentioning distasteful decisions. It is not surprising that changing market conditions helped to fashion a delivery system committed to accommodating and reinforcing adolescents' fantasies of motherhood over the genuine pain of relinquishing one's child for adoption.

These trends converged to leave the school-based centers of the 1980s as closely identified with retention as the maternity homes of the 1950s were identified with adoption. Of the 879 students served in a sample of model programs in the state of Michigan in 1981, for example, only one elected to relinquish her child for possible adoption. A recent evaluator of an alternative program for pregnant adolescents in Fremont, Michigan concluded that the services did "little to address the needs" of young women willing to consider placing their children for adoption. It was, to her, "a problem which needs more consideration." Of more than a score of large programs in Michigan, only one -- a private agency -- offered classes in decision making that addressed the realities of retention and introduced the possibility of relinquishment by bringing in representatives of adoption agencies. Although his interests are clouded, the president of the National Committee for Adoption recently echoed these concerns when he argued that "our concern is that the emphasis on making teens good parents may short-circuit the decision-making process and may inadvertently push teens, who may not be willing or able, into parenting. " He cautioned all agencies that served unwed mothers to examine "their policies and the services which are offered to pregnant teens to determine whether they may be subtly encouraging single parenting over adoption." [52]

Have we come full circle in our treatment of unwed motherhood: from the efforts of matrons in private refuges a century ago to force motherhood on young women to more recent school-based programs which, by default, leave adolescents to "decide" to care for their babies alone? The intentions may have changed, as the providers became more professional, but the impact on the young women and their children remains the same. Because the sources of sponsorship have shifted from private to public agencies, coupled with vast increases in the problem's scope, unwed motherhood has come to affect the entire community, not just the adolescents and their children.

The situation illustrates how critical it has become for helping professionals of all sorts -- educators, social workers, therapists -- to adopt an ethos of professionalism that does not impede their ability to communicate the true costs of bad choices. Our failure to grasp the impact of recent changes in professional ideology and practice in the social service fields has caused our educational enterprise to squander crucial opportunities to shape attitudes, choices, and behavior at a time when the consequences of bad choices are particularly harsh. [53]

Notes

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[1] David B. Tyack, "Health and Social Services in Public Schools: Historical Perspectives," *The Future of Children* 2 (1992), 19-31. In addition, my interpretation of the history of school-based social services draws heavily from Michael W. Sedlak and Robert L. Church, *A History of Social Services Delivered to Youth, 1880-1977,* Final Report to the National Institute of Education, Contract No. 400-79-0017,1982; Sedlak and Steven L. Schlossman, "The Public School and Social Services: Reassessing the Progressive Legacy," *Educational Theory* 35 (1985), 371-83; Sedlak, "Young Women and the City: Adolescent Deviance and the Transformation of Educational Policy, 1870-1960," *History of Education Quarterly,"* 23 (1983), 1-28; Sedlak, "Aunt Martha's Decline: The Shift from Private to Public-Sector Services for Adolescent Mothers, 1960-1986," Report to the Program on Non-Profit Organizations, Institution for Social and Policy Studies, Yale University; Steven L. Schlossman, JoAnne Brown, and Michael W. Sedlak, *The Public School in American Dentistry* (Santa Monica: CA: The Rand Corporation, 1986); David B. Tyack, "The High School as a Social Service Agency: Historical Perspectives on Current Policy Issues," *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* 1 (1979), 45-57; William J. Reese, *Power and the Promise of School Reform: Grass-roots Movements During the Progressive Era* (Boston: Routledge, & Kegan Paul, 1986); Reese, *Case Studies of Social Services of the Schools of Selected Cities,* Final Report to the National Institute of Education, Contract No. 400-79-0018, 1981; Eleanor Farrar and Robert L. Hampel, *The Delivery of Social Services in American High Schools,* Report to the Carnegie Corporation, 1985; Seymour B. Sarason and John Doris, Educational Handicap, Public Policy, and Social History (New York: Basic, 1979); and Murray Levine and Adeline Levine, *A Social History of Helping Services: Clinic, Court, School, and Community* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970).

[2] David K. Cohen and Barbara Neufeld, "The Failure of High Schools and the Progress of Education," *Daedalus* 110 (1981), 69-89.

[3] Horace Mann, *Secretary's Report to the Board of Education of Massachusetts* (Boston, 1842), 82.

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[5] Reese, *Power and the Promise of School Reform*; Reese, "Between Home and School: Organized Parents, Clubwomen, and Urban Education in the Progressive Era," *School Review* 87 (1978), 3-28; Sedlak and Church, *History of Social Services Delivered to Youth,* 20-34.

[6] Sedlak and Church, *History of Social Services Delivered to Youth.*

[7] Reese, "After Bread, Education: Nutrition and Urban School Children, 1890-1920," *Teachers College Record* 81 (1980), 496-525; Reese, *Power and the Promise of School Reform.*

[8] Sedlak and Church, *History of Social Services Delivered to Youth,* 28-29.

[9] Edwin L. Miller, "The Lunch-Room at the Englewood High School," *School Review* 13 (1905), 201-12; Office of the Business Manager, Chicago Board of Education, "What and How to Eat: Chicago's Public School Lunch Rooms," (1939), Board of Education Archives.

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] Chicago, Schools, Minutes (21 October 1908 and 10 February 1909).

[12] Chicago, Schools, Minutes (16 November 1910); Chicago, Schools, *Annual Report* (1911).

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[13] Chicago, Schools, *Annual Report* (1912), 174-75, (1913), 209; Chicago, Schools, Minutes (1 November 1911, 28 December 1908, 11 November 1914, 15 September 1915, and 31 January 1917).

[14] Waukegan, Schools, Minutes (11 November 1910, 7 November 1911, 6 June, 1912, 9 September 1919, 19 January 1920, 3 August 1920, and 7 September 1920); Anna Barrons, "The Lunchroom in the High School," *School Review* 13 (1905), 213-21.

[15] National Education Association, Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education* (Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Education Bulletin, No. 35, 1918); Edward Krug, *The Shaping of the American High School, 1880-1941,* vol. 2 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1972).

[16] Sedlak and Church, *History of Social Services Delivered to Youth*, 35-36.

[17] Lela B. Costin, "A Historical Review of School Social Work," *Social Casework* 50 (1969), 442-45.

[18] Sedlak and Church, *History of Social Services Delivered to Youth*, 38-40.

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[21] "Our Public Schools Must Not Close," reprinted in *Elementary School Journal* 34 (1933), 246ff.

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[25] Charles C. Steadman to Harold Richards (9 June 1936), in Report to the Illinois Superintendent of Public Instruction Files, Community High School District 218 (Blue Island, IL) Archives.

[26] C.H.S.D. 218 Report to the Illinois State Superintendent of Public Instruction (1937); P.E. Belting to Harold Richards (10 March 1937); Belting to Richards (31 December 1938); C.H.S.D. 218, Schools, Minutes (31 December 1938); C.H.S.D. 218 Report to the Illinois State Superintendent of Public Instruction (1941) all in C.H.S.D. 218 Archives.

[27] Sedlak and Church, *History of Social Services Delivered to Youth*, 40-45.

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[35] *U.S. Congressional Record*, 79th Congress, 2nd Session (19 February and 28 February 1946), 1451-79, 1484-1508, 1534-42; Chicago *Tribune* (20 and 22 February 1946).

[36] Chicago *Tribune* (21 February 1946); *U.S. Congressional Record*, 1493-98, 1537.

[37] Chicago *Tribune* (22 February 1946); *U.S. Statutes at Large*, 79th Congress, 2nd Session, vol. 6, pt. 1 (1946), 230-34; *U.S. Congressional Record*, 1608-28, 1724, 5602-03, 5686, 5765, 6674.

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[43] F. Emerson, "The Place of the Maternity Home," *Survey* 42 (1919), 772; see also Sedlak, "Young Women and the City" on the modernization campaign.

[44] Family Service Section Committee, Minutes for 19 June 1940; "Florence Crittenton Anchorage," (February, 1951); Mary Young, Evaluation of the Florence Crittenton Anchorage, 1951-1953; all located in the Chicago Welfare Council Records, Box 318, Chicago Historical Society.

[45] Sedlak, "Aunt Martha's Decline."

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[48] H. O'Rourke and F. Chavers, "The Use of Groups with Unmarried Mothers to Facilitate Casework," *Child Welfare* 47 (1968), 17-25.

[49] William L. Pierce, "Adoption Issues, Trends and Networking," address to the National Committee for Adoption, Inc. (1988), 3.

[50] Sedlak, Aunt Martha's Decline;" John Platt, "Social Traps," *American Psychologist* 28 (1973), 641-51.

[51] See, for example, F. Hollis, "On Revisiting Social Work," *Social Casework* 61 (1980), 3-10; Max Siporin, "Moral Philosophy in Social Work Today," *Social Service Review* 56 (1982), 516-38.

[52] See, for example, Michigan Department of Education, School Program Services, "An Information Report on Pilot School Age Parents Projects, Model Sites," (Lansing, MI, 1982), 12; Rosemary Moss, "An Overview: Alternative Education for Pregnant Teenage Girls -- 1972-1980," report submitted to the Fremont Public Schools (1980); J. Bemis Diers and R. Sharpe, "The Teen-age Single Mother," *Child Welfare* 55 (1976), 309-18; J. Harriman, "In Trouble," *Atlantic Monthly* (March 1970), 94-98. These observations about patterns of pressure in the public school-based programs has been confirmed by the work of Gail Zellman of the Rand Corp. and Lana Muraskin, formerly of the National Institute of Education; I am indebted to both of them for sharing their considerable understanding of adolescent pregnancy policy and practice since the 1960s.

[53] These concerns about adolescent pregnancy programs parallel a mounting critique of public education more generally, which has recognized the problems of "neutrality" and "passivity" in the classroom that have not challenged patterns of "bargaining" and "treaty making" between teachers and students; see Philip A. Cusick, *The Egalitarian Ideal and the American High School* (New York, 1983), Michael Sedlak, Christopher Wheeler, Diana Pullin, and Philip Cusick, *Selling Students Short: Classroom Bargains and Educational Reform in the American High School* (New York, 1986), and Arthur Powell, Eleanor Farrar, and David Cohen, *The Shopping Mall High School: Winners and Losers in the American High School* (Boston, 1985), for a sample of this work.

CHAPTER 4

THE EDUCATIONAL EQUITIES IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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I

As recently as the midpoint of the present century, equity concerns had no real place on the agenda of educational policy. While there existed common schools in the rough image of Horace Mann's model, these schools were common more in form than fact. In the South, white and black schoolchildren were required by law to attend separate schools; in practice, the same was true in many parts of the North and West as well. Across the nation, handicapped children were treated as ineducable and "excused"--less politely and more accurately, excluded--from instruction. Pregnant schoolgirls were kept out of public schools for fear that their presence might be an incitement. For similar reasons, Spanish-speaking youngsters in the Southwest who spoke their home language during recess and children perceived as troublemakers by school administrators were also barred from classes.

The quality of instruction varied widely from place to place. Wealthy states spent, on average, two or three times as much for the education of each student as did poor states. Southern states, which were the last to establish public schools, were also notably stingy in financing education, particularly the education of black children. While efforts to equalize intra-state school expenditures dated to the turn of the century, these had largely failed. In many states, the poorest school districts could barely provide a rudimentary education--it was not uncommon for a district not to distribute textbooks or to operate its schools on a foreshortened year--while neighboring districts with more ample tax bases outspent them many times over. At the time, neither the states nor the federal government played a major role in resource redistribution.

To correct those gross inequities, and so to bring about "simple justice" [1] nationwide, became a theme of educational policy and constitutional law after the decision in the 1954 Segregation Cases. [2] While that campaign began in the courts, it eventually involved all three branches of the federal government. In its wake the grossest of unfairnesses to black and handicapped students, poor and Latino and female students, were corrected. [3]

While those events marked only an important chapter in the annals of educational reform, they were hardly the final chapter. The characterization of reform has continued to evolve, generally in parallel with shifts in the national political climate. While the rhetoric of the 1960s emphasized equity, the theme of the more austere 1970s was "back to basics." Excellence was stressed during the Reagan-Bush years--a theme that had gone unheard since the crisis of national confidence brought on by the Soviets' launching of Sputnik in 1958--and with a nod to fashionable market analogies, competition and choice also became policy buzzwords.[4] With the 1992 presidential election, the pendulum of reform seems likely to swing once again, with equity assuming greater importance.

The significance of this shift should not be exaggerated. The perceived need to satisfy equity-based concerns persisted in muted form even in the heyday of excellence: assuring universal school readiness, for instance, was one of the six national goals set by the fifty governors and President Bush at the 1988 education summit. [5] Moreover, the continuing involvement of the courts in a wide variety of educational policy issues has given equity advocates an ongoing forum. Although federal judges have become less sympathetic to redistributionist arguments in recent years (partly reflecting the more conservative composition of the federal bench), state tribunals have taken up the cause.

Equity claims were initially straightforward and could readily command the support of all except the bigoted. No longer. As the nature of the asserted unfairness has become less obvious and the sought-after remedies--affirmative action, greater resources for expanding categories of disadvantage, all-minority schools and the like--has become more controversial, equity has come to function more as a partisan rallying cry than as a guide.

The language of equity continues to be deployed by policy-makers devising a new national course, state legislators crafting financing formulas, school administrators shaping an institutional mission, teachers designing a classroom environment, parents making decisions about their childrens' futures, and even fifth graders judging the fairness of their teacher's treatment. But so many and so conflicting are the meanings assigned to equity that the concept cannot be used as a yardstick for appraising school reform. Nor can equity even serve more loosely as a term of art, an "I know it when I see it" standard similar to Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart's conception of obscenity.

Instead, when reference is made to equity, what's being signaled is support of a particular arrangement of educational resources, such as dollars, attention or respect--or else support of a particular pattern of educational outcomes, such as achievement, satisfaction of needs, autonomy or ethnic identity. There are many reasons to favor one or another pattern, but upon inspection these reasons are usually distinct from the idea of equity itself. Equity has also become an advocate's weapon, a good thing being contrasted with something less good: in the contemporary discourse on American education, it's instructive that no one favors *inequality* of opportunity, at least not out loud. Equity has this much in common with excellence, the mantra of the 1980s--it has to be appreciated as a protean and politicized concept.[6] If this essay contributes some clarity to all that policy talk, and in so doing adds perspective, it will have done its job.

II

In a society where, as Alexis de Tocqueville observed a century-and-a-half-ago in *Democracy in America*, "scarcely any political question arises which does not, sooner or later, become transformed into a legal question," lawyers and judges have given equity its most powerful modern meanings. For that reason, the legal configurations of equity offer a useful starting point.

The benchmark issue, of course, is the quintessentially American dilemma of racial equality, and the benchmark case is *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). In overturning state-mandated school segregation as a denial of equal educational opportunity, *Brown* emphasized the racial dimensions of equality. Blacks and whites were to be treated equitably; this meant, at the least, that students could not formally be assigned to public schools on the basis of their skin color.

The justices could have outlawed segregation without at the same time emphasizing the importance of education. Subsequent Supreme Court rulings which undid segregation of public facilities such as parking lots and restrooms were not premised on the constitutional significance of these facilities. They relied instead on a constitutional theory of racial insult that could have been applied equally persuasively to segregated schools.[7] But the fact that *Brown* concerned education is hardly incidental. For one thing, the strategy of the NAACP, which orchestrated the segregation litigation over a period of decades, was to concentrate the Supreme Court's attention on forms of segregation in higher education. By the time *Brown* came to the high court, the justices had already ordered the dismantling of "separate but equal" instruction for law students at the University of Texas, graduate students at the University of Oklahoma and in the state of Missouri.[8] In a formalistic sense, then, the plaintiffs in *Brown* were asking the Court to do no more than apply these precedents to public schools.

The Supreme Court also made much of the fact that this case concerned education, "perhaps the most important function of state and local governments...the very foundation of good citizenship." The opinion declared that "[i]t is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education," and added that the harm of segregation "generates a feeling of inferiority that may affect [black children's] hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone." In a famous footnote, the Court turned to available social science evidence on child development, including psychologist Kenneth Clark's famous black doll-white doll experiment and a survey of social scientists' opinions, to bolster the constitutional contention that, for schooling at least, separate means "inherently unequal."[9]

Viewed nearly forty years later, these paeans to education are best appreciated not as subtle constitutional reasoning but instead as a rhetorical strategy, a way to marshall popular support for the abolition of Jim Crow regimes. But at the time, it was widely believed that the constitutional importance of education constituted an independent legal justification--that desegregation, while constitutionally required, was not the only constitutionally relevant aspect of educational equity.

Give reform-minded lawyers an inch and they'll take a mile: that aphorism describes the course of subsequent litigation over the constitutional meanings of equal educational opportunity.

With respect to race, the proscription against formal color barriers was broadened, both judicially and legislatively during the two subsequent decades. Immediately after *Brown*, commentators made much of the supposed difference between desegregation, which the law required, and integration, which was said to lie outside the pale of the law [10], but in the face of Southern resistance, that distinction collapsed. In school districts where segregation had been required prior to *Brown*, the justices declared that the only satisfactory guarantee of nondiscrimination was to dismantle racially identifiable schools--to produce "a system without a 'white' school and a 'Negro' school, but just schools," as the Supreme Court declared in 1968.[11] The 1964 Civil Rights Act was read similarly by the Johnson administration, and in the first years of the Nixon administration as well. [12]

Yet if equal opportunity seemed a matter of simple justice after *Brown*, soon enough confusion about the meaning of equity began to surface, as allegations of racial inequity became more nuanced in character and proposed remedies for discrimination became more ambitious in their scope. In a residentially segregated Southern school district that had formally abandoned racial distinctions, was widespread busing required to achieve "just schools"? If so, the justices were asked (as recently as 1991), for how many years was the district legally obliged to keep busing students? [13]

Public schools in many communities outside the South were segregated in form if not in fact. Judges pondered the legal significance of whether segregation in a particular locale came about innocently or deliberately--whether it was *de jure* or *de facto*.[14] (A different argument that was put forward is that, since government assigns all students to schools, any segregation that exists is by definition *de jure*, and so impermissible.) Judges also assessed the constitutionality of practices that promoted segregation, such as race-consciousness in assigning teachers or the drawing of school attendance boundaries with the effect of maintaining racially identifiable schools. Did such common practices amount to official segregation, officially-created inequity?

Such questions splintered the Supreme Court, even as they became matters of widespread public debate. During the deliberations in the 1971 Charlotte, North Carolina case [15], a suit involving substantial student busing in an urban-suburban community, a majority of the justices reportedly favored abandoning the *de jure-de facto* distinction and adopting a single nation-wide constitutional standard of racial equity. Before a decision was handed down, the majority retreated from this position, in order to maintain the unbroken line of unanimous opinions which the Court had long regarded as critical to its credibility. [16] But this tradition of judicial unanimity could not withstand changes both in the composition of the Supreme Court and in the inequities being asserted. Nor could that tradition survive in a political climate which made opposition to "massive busing" a national campaign theme. [17]

The first time the justices considered the constitutionality of Northern segregation, in the 1973 Denver case [18], a divided Supreme Court relied more on the legalistic arcana, burdens of pleading and proof, than on the kind of broadly understandable principles set out in *Brown*. Lower court judges struggled to interpret these technical rulings; not surprisingly, in the name of racial equity they imposed different legal obligations on seemingly similar communities. Then, a year later in the Detroit case, a bare majority of the justices drew a sharp legal line between segregation within a school district and segregation that crossed district lines, all but declaring that district boundaries were immune from judicial scrutiny. [19]

This decision, coupled with the increasing migration of whites from the cities to the suburbs, made racial equity a term of legal art rather than an educational reality for students. Small wonder, then, that in the name of equity, school districts such as Detroit and Milwaukee have proposed setting up separate schools for young black males who are not succeeding in the mostly-minority mainstream. Small wonder, as well, that the challenges to such proposals, made both by integrationists and those concerned about the needs of female students, have also relied on the rhetoric of equity.

III

Attention to and confusion about equity proliferated far beyond the confines of race. Blacks were classically regarded as a "discrete and insular minority" [20], prone to irrational victimization at the hands of a hostile majority, and for that reason entitled to special solicitude in the courts. In the second half of the century, other groups would draw constitutional parallels between their treatment and the treatment of blacks.

Advocates for the handicapped have been most successful at establishing the analogy in the courts. Historically, handicapped children had been warehoused in day-sitting programs or else excluded from schools as ineducable. That changed when federal courts [21], and later Congress in the 1973 Education for All Handicapped Children Act [22], recognized that all children are educable--that is, capable of moving from greater to lesser dependence on others--and are entitled to an "appropriate education." By law, this requirement meant instruction that was both suited to the special needs of the handicapped and as closely linked as possible to the educational mainstream.

The meaning of "appropriate education" soon became disputed terrain. Did changing a catheter for an otherwise physically able child count as education, and hence something that school personnel had to do? Did handicap include emotional upheaval? learning disabilities? language deficits? an "at risk" childhood? In the name of equity, was it sufficient to provide an educationally *plausible* setting, which was the most appropriate among the district's limited range of offerings--or did the educational regime have to be the *most* appropriate, even if that meant spending public dollars for private school tuition? How were conflicts to be resolved between equity understood primarily in terms of handicap-specific needs, on the one side, and, on the other side, equity understood in terms of a child's proximity to the educational mainstream? [23]

Other claimants for educational equity raised different, though equally vexing, concerns.

Advocates for female students focused on sex-based inequities. These included the distribution of resources in athletics--although not in extracurricular activities generally, where more was spent on girls than boys. They emphasized the relative paucity of attention that girls received in the classroom--though not classroom performance, where girls typically outdid boys. And they questioned the permissibility of all-boys' schools--even while defending all-women's colleges. [24]

Limited English-speakers pushed for equity as well.[25] This meant, variously, total English language immersion, or else programs to ease the transition to English, or else distinct linguistic and cultural tracks, running from kindergarten through twelfth grade, designed to maintain group identity--separate but equal programs, if you will, the very arrangement that *Brown* had struck down as inequitable.

Like African-Americans before them, these claimants turned to Congress and the administrative agencies as well as to the courts. They won official recognition in landmark judicial rulings and in legislation such as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act and Title IX of the 1972 Education Amendments. But advocates of equity have spent the better part of the past two decades in the shadows as educational reform efforts increasingly focused on maintaining minimum educational standards, reducing the incidence of violence and drugs, and promoting excellence. While there have been a handful of equity-enhancing rulings--notably the Supreme Court's 1982 decision that children whose parents entered the country illegally are nonetheless entitled to a free public education [26]--the hope of massively boosting the educational resources delivered to blacks, ethnic minorities and other have-less groups, which figured prominently in policy pronouncements a generation ago, has gone mostly unrealized.

IV

Attention to equity has focused not only on the claims of disadvantaged *groups* but also on the distribution of educational *resources* generally. Historically, this meant a universal and free system of education, a common curriculum, and equal access to teachers and texts. [27] But there existed sizable variations in per pupil expenditure and services to children from one state to another, within states, within school districts and within schools. In the past thirty years, all these differences have been challenged by equity-minded reformers.

Beginning in the 1960s, there were modest attempts to deploy the new federal presence in the schools as a way of encouraging the equalization of resources. Some communities initially distributed the billion-plus dollars made available through Title I of the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (now Chapter 1) in the belief that poorer school districts should benefit. But the intention of the legislation was really to add poverty to the list of individual differences that warranted equitable treatment; states and school districts that sought to use Title I funds for general aid were dissuaded by administrative and judicial orders.[28] A federal advisory commission appointed by President Nixon recommended a more direct role for Washington in resource redistribution, proposing that federal dollars flow to states that had equalized spending. But that idea went nowhere, as states prevailed against what they regarded as Washington's meddling.

Equity advocates focused more energy on rewriting the formulas for distributing a state's resources among its school districts. Because localities relied primarily on the property tax to support their schools, richer communities were able to spend far more on schools than their poorer cousins. Reformers had long campaigned for bigger state grants to benefit poor and urban districts, but with only limited success, because the wealthy suburban districts could usually block substantial resource redistribution in the state legislature. [29]

In the wake of *Brown v. Board of Education,* these reformers began looking to the courts for help. From the outset, though, the conceptual puzzle posed great difficulties: What does equity mean in the context of educational resources or inputs? In a 1969 case, it was argued that the state of Illinois had a constitutional obligation to apportion funds according to the needs of students. [30] But the problem, as the federal court saw things, was that "need" was not a judicially manageable standard. It provided no meaningful way of choosing between the claims of the ablest and the claims of the least prepared, no meaningful criterion at all. A very different principle of equity, requiring equal funding of all schoolchildren, was put forward as a possible alternative. That equation of equality with sameness is a familiar enough formulation, but not one that makes much educational sense. Was it really wrong for a state to respond to variations in cost of living, for example, or to attend to the higher costs of educating handicapped students? Not surprisingly, the federal trial court concluded that these were policy questions, better addressed to a legislature than the judiciary; and the Supreme Court summarily affirmed that ruling.

The critical moment in attempt to secure resource equity through the courts came in *Rodriguez v. San Antonio School District*, a 1973 Supreme Court case. [31] The legal challenge to Texas' finance scheme was couched in a manner more coherent than needs and less strait-jacketing than sameness: the quality of public education may not be a function of wealth, other than the wealth of the state as a whole. This approach to equity stressed fiscal neutrality: what was objectionable was the correlation between the per-pupil wealth of a school district and the dollars spent for each pupil. Any scheme for distributing resources that was fiscally neutral, including a plan premised on needs or equal dollars, satisfied the proposed constitutional standard. The plan favored by the reformers who promoted fiscal neutrality was district power equalizing: under this approach, equal tax rates would guarantee equal dollars for schoolchildren, regardless of a district's wealth. [32]

The Supreme Court accepted the argument that the Texas school finance law (and by implication, the law in every state except Hawaii, which operates a single school district) was inequitable--"chaotic and unjust," as Justice Potter Stewart wrote in his concurring opinion. Nonetheless, by a 5-4 majority, the Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the statute.

"Nothing this Court holds today in any way detracts from our historic dedication to public education," insisted the justices, but the message of the decision was otherwise. Education did not occupy a preferred constitutional place. Rather, it was a form of social welfare which could be provided, more or less, as the state saw fit, much as the state had broad leeway in distributing food, clothing and shelter. The Supreme Court intimated there might be a minimum entitlement to education--perhaps the constitutional meaning of equity required states to offer basic schooling.

But as the justices saw things, the existing system more than met that standard of entitlement.

At the federal level, the *Rodriguez* decision marked an end to the push for equity in school financing. The possibilities for further judicial consideration of the matter had apparently been exhausted; and Congress and the White House appeared uninterested in the issue. But the issue flourished in the states; school finance came to illustrate the idea of a federal system as laboratories of policy experimentation. A number of states chose to rewrite their school finance laws to bring about greater equality among districts. Legal challenges were brought in almost half the states, based on state equal protection clauses or else on the language in many state constitutions that mandates a "thorough and efficient system of public education." In some states, notably California, these lawsuits prompted substantial equalization of funding,; other states such as New Jersey, resurrected the idea that states had to respond to students' needs or to the special needs of cities; elsewhere, as in Texas, the matter has been almost continuously in the courts. The range of legislative and judicial views on what is required to bring about fair school financing reflects the breadth and diffuseness of the meanings of equity.[33]

V

Other equity advocates have taken a different tack, arguing that meaningful equity has to do, not within inputs but with the *outcomes* of education. [34] Throughout the 1960s, the dour conclusions of the *Equal Educational Opportunity Survey*, popularly if misleadingly summed as "nothing works," dampened reformers' enthusiasm for strategies to equalize outcomes. [35] But the effective schools research undertaken in the past two decades, with its emphasis on what makes for successful schools, suggested a possible line of constitutional argument. [36]

As with efforts to redistribute inputs, in the discourse on outcomes uncertainty has focused on what standard to propose in the name of equity. Advocates have called for a rule mandating equal outcomes for all students--or, differently, for a rule requiring equal outcomes across racial and class lines, so that the distribution of, say, sixth grade reading scores would be identical for black and white (or rich and poor) schoolchildren. Others argued that, at the least, schools have an obligation to mandate minimum levels of educational success for all students. By this view, a student who graduates without being able to read has a constitutional grievance against the system. [37]

These many understandings of equity have created the kinds of puzzles beloved only by philosophers and law professors. Consider: In Town A, a child with a particular handicap gets private school tuition underwritten; meanwhile, Town B places an identical student in a regular public school classroom for most of the day and provides modest supplementary help. Do *both* students have a legal grievance? Or, to take another example, Town C scrupulously balances the assignment of minority teachers among its schools, only to counter the complaint that it is failing to offer role models to black students and so is dooming them to failure. Town D's philosophy, which emphasizes the concept of role models, runs into objections from blacks, who claim that they are getting a segregated education--and from whites, who claim an entitlement to integrated instruction. (The constitutionality of creating a school for black male students presents similar issues.) And what about this situation? Town E makes sure that the dollar/ student ratio is the same in all its schools, while Town F deliberately spends more on those who, in its judgment, need more--the handicapped, perhaps, or the gifted, or children from "at risk" families. How does a court handle the raft of court cases filed by unhappy parents in these towns?

Such examples can be endlessly multiplied, which is one reason why *Educational Policy and the Law,* the 860 page casebook that I have co-authored has required three wholesale revisions and two supplements in less than two decades. While it would be cheering to report that the judicial opinions, the scholarly commentary and the many statutes that purport to define equal opportunity provide a path through this confusion, it would also be untrue.

The concept of needs has one meaning for the handicapped and another for those with deficits that aren't accepted as a handicap. Courts quarrel over when a once-segregated school district has become "unitary," and so can set school attendance boundaries to coincide with the boundaries of neighborhoods that have become segregated. Whether the preferences of the black families living in those communities have any bearing on the matter is itself debatable. Meanwhile, legislators who believe that classic notions of racial equity have become outmoded threaten to deny judges the authority to make such rulings. In disputes over equity between boys and girls on the athletic field, girls are sometimes said to be entitled to identical treatment (a single coed team), sometimes to different treatment (sex-segregated teams). And so it goes.

The present Supreme Court is unlikely to contribute much to our understanding of educational equity anytime soon. Nor will it have the chance, for wise advocates have learned to keep such issues out of the federal courts, instead addressing their pleas to state tribunals. But even at the height of equity-consciousness, clarity was in short supply. Though the Court usually had principles in mind, it paid little attention to conflicts among those principles. When the idea of equity became inexpedient to pursue, notably in the Texas school finance case, the justices backed off.

Nor has Congress done much better. The definitions of equity in various pieces of federal legislation--Chapter 1, Head Start, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act and the like--don't attempt consistency or even coherence. Usually they represent political responses to interest group pressures. Sometimes bureaucratic pressures are the driving force. Consider, for example, the widespread use of pullout programs for slow learners financed by Chapter 1, adopted not because this makes educational sense but because it leaves a tidy paper trail for the auditors. But whether politics or bureaucratics is regnant, the pull of equity on policy is fairly weak.

VI

The most significant differences in treatment of students may well be found *within* schools, in the dollars spent on, and the quality of teachers assigned to, different classes.[38] During the Supreme Court argument in the remedy phase of *Brown*, [39] NAACP attorney Thurgood Marshall responded to a question from the bench about the permissibility of ability grouping by declaring that it was acceptable "to put all the smart ones together and all the dumb ones together," so long as the basis for assignment was not racial. Barely a decade later, though, in perhaps the most ambitious judicial definition of educational equity, a federal judge in Washington, D.C., ordered an end to segregation that resulted from ability grouping, abolishing tracking based on students' tested ability and ordering that expenditures among schools be equalized [40].

Inequities are endemic even within classrooms, in the ways teachers respond to different students. Yet as sociologist Christopher Jencks points out in an elegant essay, within classrooms as among school districts, there is no one right standard of fair treatment to impose. [41] Jencks asks a hypothetical teacher--who, with a nod to "Pygmalion," he calls Ms. Higgins--how she would go about equitably treating the students in her third grade reading class. "What [does] her belief in equal opportunity impl[y] about the distribution of the main educational resources at her disposal, her time and attention."[42] He takes Ms. Higgins through five possible responses: *democratic equality*, giving everyone equal time and attention; *moralistic justice*, rewarding those who make the most effort; *weak humane justice*, compensating students who have been shortchanged at home or in earlier schooling; *strong humane justice*, compensating youngsters who have been shortchanged in any way; and *utilitarianism*, focusing attention on the ablest.

Several of these ideal type-approaches have their approximate counterparts in such macro-strategies as Head Start, Chapter 1, and former Education Secretary William Bennett's "excellence" agenda. But Jencks points out the tensions among them and the practical difficulties in implementing any of them. Identity of treatment, while intuitively appealing, makes for hard going in the real world of differently attentive students. Though moralistic equality means to focus on that attentiveness, as a practical matter it cannot, and so winds up rewarding achievement, including effortless achievement, which is not at all the intention. Humane theories of justice, while more attractive, are hard to put into action, for how can "Ms. Higgins take account of *all* the factors that influence an individual's choices, including subjective costs and benefits" which influence a child's opportunities to learn? How can she even know, for instance, which parents who encourage learning and which do not--and what can she do about the difference?

Moralistic theories of classroom justice assume that children can be held accountable for their failures because they have free will; humane justice assumes that the settings in which kids wind up determine their choices. Moralistic justice awards prizes, while humane justice encourages Ms. Higgins to act as a coach who makes all her students into prize-winners. With "every moment in our lives...both an ending and a beginning," says Jencks, both world views are sometimes right, and there is no ready way out of this quandary. Utilitarianism, which is supposed to maximize the overall welfare levels of students, requires knowledge about the relationship between Ms. Higgins' time and pupils' eventual success--specifically, about whether a teacher can have more of an impact on the ablest or least able readers--that the empirical literature does not provide.

One response to these uncertainties, Jencks concludes, is for Ms. Higgins to revert to her original intuition and treat all students identically. None of the arguments for an unequal distribution of time and attention is really compelling--and none of the principles, neither virtue nor disadvantage nor benefits, is really usable in Ms. Higgins' classroom. "Democracies typically put the burden of proof on those who favor unequal treatment, and in practice this burden is so heavy that the egalitarian 'null hypothesis' can always carry the day." Equity, Jencks concludes, "is an ideal consistent with almost every vision of a good society," whether centered on markets or rights or social programs. It is a "universal solvent," compatible with the dreams of almost everyone. Jencks sees these attributes of equity, not as signaling a fatal weakness of the concept but rather as revealing its peculiar strength. In this formulation, equity becomes one of those conflict-muting aspirations, the kind of common ideal without which social ordering is impossible. But it could be said with equal justification that focusing on equity--or, more typically, on inequity--serves mostly to maintain dissatisfactions, senses of injustice, in the face of an impossible-to-satisfy aspiration of policy.

VII

What might be the nature of equity-driven policy initiatives to come? Advocates for equity have typically pushed their cause as if equity existed in a sphere of its own, apart from the aspirations of other reformers and other reforms. When the unfairnesses were glaringly obvious, and readily definable in constitutional terms, this made sense. But efforts to promote educational equity affect other contemporary proposals for systemic change; and other reform aspirations, whether for greater choice or a redesign of the governance of schools, for multiculturalism or the invocation of a national identity, need to be assessed in the light of equity. This transformation of the nature of equity-based arguments has institutional ramifications as well. In the decades following *Brown*, the Supreme Court, that "least dangerous branch" of the federal government, took the lead in defining equity, with the coordinate branches mostly implementing standards set by the judiciary. In the present era, though, equity is fully entangled in the policy give-and-take, the political give-and-take too, which surrounds educational policy making. That means equity concerns will no longer primarily be the province of judges and lawyers but will arise wherever policy is being fashioned.

Equity has often been equated with sameness. But a hundred flowers can bloom in the equity garden, since very different kinds of schools take seriously all the aspects of equity that emerge from the judicial and legislative record as well as from the annals of good practice. No single philosophy of education or pedagogical strategy is uniquely synonymous with equity claims.

Equity entails both maintaining uniform standards and paying individual attention to students' talents and desires. Common rules have the advantage of offering a sustaining structure of fairness, and rules make it plain that the locus of authority in schools is not subject to debate, although the form that rules take will depend on the pedagogical philosophy of the school. Interest in promoting equity must take account of significant differences in students' backgrounds. In the increasingly heterogeneous urban public schools across the country, paying attention to cultural differences is neither a frill nor a matter of political correctness but a necessity. How else can teachers recognize styles of learning or sense what there is to be drawn out from individual students? How else can schools convince parents, some habitually timid toward authority and others angry about their own treatment as students, to involve themselves in their children's education? Equity means different things to children, teachers and parents. Partly these differences are developmental. They also reflect other things as well, including gender-based and race-based variations in treatment. The role one occupies in the school hierarchy matters also. Ask a teacher or a child if she is being treated fairly, ask the child's parents too, and the criteria for fairness will, understandably, vary.

To be meaningful, the aspiration to promote equity requires more resources than urban and poor rural school systems are typically able to muster. The argument about whether boosting financial support for schools or encouraging innovation matters most is similar to the beer commercial in which one side shouts "tastes good" while the other responds "less filling." The equitable distribution of a pittance embodies a grudging form of fairness. It is also a morally unsatisfactory form of fairness, because of the extent to which differences in the resources devoted to a child's education still depend on the wealth of a child's family and the community in which he or she resides.

Only the narrowest understanding of equity focuses exclusively on achievement tests or any other fixed measure. In day-to-day school life, as Christopher Jencks' account of Ms. Higgins' classroom reveals, equity has more to do with paying attention to the broad array of claims--some based on need and others on effort or performance--that students advance. It also entails attending to the concrete choices that teachers and administrators make on a day-to-day basis: what deserves attention, in the name of equity, is the content of teachers' exchanges with students, teachers' conversations with one another and with parents after school, professional dialogue as well.

As these observations suggest, equity--or, more precisely, *the equities*--are necessarily in conflict. Public schools are regularly called upon to be what no other institution in the society even aspires to becoming: nonracist, nonsexist, nonclassist, open places; palaces of learning, enclaves of joy which respond equally well to a range of children's talents and desires which would fill a modern-day Noah's Ark. How could expectations be otherwise, given the pulls and tugs of the society--and how could any school *not* fail at this mission?

This view of the equities--as significant, particularized, in conflict and in flux--is consistent with the larger aims of contemporary educational reform. It is a conception that confirms both the protean nature and the breadth of aspiration that the idea of educational equity entails.

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[1]-The phrase is taken from Richard Kluger, *Simple Justice* (1975).

[2]-387 U.S. 483 (1954).

[3]-See Mark G. Yudof, David L. Kirp and Betsy Levin, *Education Policy and the Law*. St. Paul: West Publishing Co., 1991, chapters 5 and 6, for a thorough compendium of the cases and law review articles on equal educational opportunity.

[4]-Ibid at chapter 7. See also David Kirp, "What School choice Really Means," 20 *Atlantic Monthly* 5 (November 1992)

[5]-See David Kirp, "The 'Education President,'" in Leo Heagerty, ed., *Eyes on the President: History in Essays and Cartoons* (Occidental, CA: Chronos, 1993)

[6]-See, e.g., Thomas Timar and David Kirp, *Managing Educational Excellence* (Philadelphia: Falmer Publishing Co., 1988); Leon Botstein, "Education Reform in the Reagan Era: False Paths, Broken Promises," *Social Policy* 3-11 (Spring 1988)

[7]-See, e.g., Watson v. Memphis, 373 U.S. 526(1963); New Orleans City Park Improvement Ass'n v. Detiege, 358 U.S. 54 (1958).

[8]-Missouri ex re. Gaines v. Canada, 305 U.S. 337 (1938); McLaurin v. Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma, 332 U.S. 631 (1950); Sweatt v. Painter, 339 U.S. 629 (1950).

[9]-See, e.g., Edgar Cahn, "Jurisprudence," 30 *N.Y.U. Law Rev.* 150 (1955).

[10]-See, e.g., Robert McKay, "With All Deliberate Speed--A Study of School Desegregation," 31 *N.Y.U. L. Rev.*991 (1956).

[11]-Green v. County School Board of New Kent County, Virginia, 391 U.S. 430 (1968).

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[12]-See Harrell Rodgers, Jr. and Charles Bullock III, *Law and Social Change*, New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, (1972); Gary Orfield, *The Reconstruction of Southern Education*, New York, NY: John Wiley, (1969).

[13]-Board of Education of Oklahoma City Public Schools v. Dowell, 498 U.S. 237 (1991).

[14]-See,e.g., Paul Brest, "The Supreme Court, 1975 Term-Foreword: In Defense of the Antidiscrimination Principle, " 90 *Harvard Law Review* 1 (1976); Frank Goodman, "*De Facto* Segregation: A Constitutional and Empirical Analysis," 60 *California Law Review* 275 (1972); Own Fiss, "Racial Imbalance in the Public Schools: The Constitutional Concepts," 78 *Harvard Law Review* 564 (1965); U.S. Civil Rights Commission, *Racial Isolation in the Public Schools* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1968).

[15]-Swann v. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education, 402 U.S.1 (1971).

[16]-Dennis J. Hutchinson, "Unanimity and Desegregation: Decision-making in the Supreme Court, 1948-1958," 68 *Georgetown Law Journal* 1 (1979).

[17]-See generally Gary Orfield, *Must We Bus?*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institute (1979).

[18]-Keyes v. School District No. 1, 413 U.S. 189 (1973).

[19]-Milliken v. Bradley, 418 U.S. 717 (1974).

[20]-U.S. v. Carolene Products CO., 304 U.S. 144 (1938)

[21]-Mills v. Board of Education, 348 F. Supp. 866 (D.D.C.1972); PARC v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 334 F. Supp. 1257 (E.D.Pa., 1971).

[22]-29 U.S.C.A. SS 1401-1461.

[23]-See generally Yudof, Kirp and Levin, *supra* Note 3 at 719-740.

[24]-*Ibid* at 760-793.

[25]-*Ibid* at 793-816. See also Lau v. Nichols, 414 U.S. 563 (1974)

[26]-Plyler v. Doe, 457 U.S. 202 (1982).

[27]-James Coleman, "The COncept of Equality of Educational Opportunity," 38 *Harvard Educational Review* 7 (1968).

[28]-See *Report on Changes Under Chapter 1 of the Education Consolidation and Improvement Act*, Prepared for the Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary, and Vocational Education of the Committee on Education and Labor of the U.S. House of Representatives (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1985).

[29]-See Walter Garms, James Guthrie and Lawrence Pierce, *School Finance: The Economies and Politics of Public Education*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall (1978).

[30]-McInnis v. Shapiro, 93 F.Supp. 32 (N.D. Ill. 1968), *aff'd sub nom.* McInnis v. Ogilvie, 394 U.S. 322 (1969). The needs principle was first articulated in Arthur Wise, *Rich Schools, Poor Schools: The Promise of Equal Educational Opportunity*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press (1968)

[31]-San Antonio Independent School District v. Rodriguez, 411 U.S.1 (1973).

[32]-John Coons, William Clune and Stephen Sugarman, *Private Wealth and Public Education* (Cambridge, Ma: Harvard University Press, 1971).

[33]-See Richard Lehne, *The Quest for Justice: The Politics of School Finance Reform*, New York, NY: Longman 1978; John Coons, "Recent Trends in Science Fiction: *Serrano* among the People of Number, 6 *Journal of Law and Education* 23 (1977); William E. Thro, "To Render Them Safe: The Analysis of State Constitutional Provisions in Public School Finance Reform Litigation," 75 *Virginia Law Review* 1639 (1989).

[34]-Mark Yudof, "Effective Schools and State Constitutions: A Variety of Opinions," 63 *Texas Law Review* 865 (1985)

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[35]-Christopher Jencks, "The Coleman Report and the Conventional Wisdom," in Frederick Mosteller and Daniel Moynihan, eds., *On Equality of Educational Opportunity*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press 69 (1972).

[36]-Stewart Purkey and Marshall S. Smith, "Effective Schools: A Review," 83 *Elementary School Journal* 427 (1983).

[37]-See generally Gershon Rattner, "A New Legal Duty for Urban Public Schools: Effective Education in Basic Skills," 63 *Texas Law Review* 777 (1985).

[38]-See Edward Pauley, *The Classroom Crucible* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992).

[39]-349 U.S. 294 (1955). See generally Mark Yudof, "Implementation Theories and Desegregation Realities," 32 *Alabama Law Review* 441 (1981); Robert Carter, "The Warren Court and Desegregation," 67 *Michigan Law Review* 237 (1968).

[40]-Hobson v. Hansen, 269 F.Supp. 401 (D.D.C. 1967); see generally David Kirp, "Schools as Sorters: The Constitutional and Policy Implications of Student Classification," 121 *University of Pennsylvania Law Review* 705 (1973).

[41]-Christopher Jencks, "Whom Must We Treat Equally for Educational Opportunity to Be Equal?" 98 *Ethics* 518 (1988).

CHAPTER 5

THE CONSTRUCTION OF ETHNIC DIVERSITY AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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The construction of ethnic diversity in American public education underwent a profound alteration over the course of the twentieth century. This shift can be gauged by comparing what an American history textbook published in 1917 had to say about immigrants from Asia, as compared to one published in 1991. The former, Charles M. Thompson's *A History of the United States*, which included only a few pages on racial minorities, did not spare their sensitivities. "The Chinese and Japanese have neither demanded, nor have they been asked," it explained, "to become a real part of American life. They are separated from the mass of the people by racial and religious differences. At the present time a 'Chinaman,' in the mind of the typical American, is a foreigner and must remain so."[1] The latter, David A. Bice's *"To Form a More Perfect Union"*, devoted an entire unit of six chapters to Native Americans and another unit of six chapters to immigrant minorities including blacks, representing in total almost fifteen percent of all pages in the book. In complete opposition to Thompson's dismissive portrayal of the profoundly alien Asian newcomer, Bice's text supplied an approving account of the assimilating and achieving Asian immigrant:

> Many people of Japanese ancestry have risen to important positions in American society. They have become political leaders, educators, artists, scientists, and successful business people. . . . . [Asian Americans] have tried hard to become good Americans. They want to solve their own problems. Their children also work hard and usually excel in education. Even with all their problems, most Asian Americans are happy to be in

the United States for the freedom it brings.[2]

These extracts revealed the enormous gulf of perceptual change separating these two American history textbooks. From the early twentieth century to the eve of the twenty-first century, the creators of texts and curricula radically reshaped their treatment of ethnic minorities and their relation to American nationhood. From a marginal and depersonalized status, minorities ascended to admirable and exemplary figures.

The construction of ethnic diversity in the schools evolved through a complex series of historically determined policies and practices. To think clearly about school reform in an era embracing multicultural pluralism, policymakers must have an understanding of the changing sets of connections between intellectual and ideological forces, on the one hand, and the school's presentation of diversity, on the other.

For much of national history, American schools paid nearly exclusive attention to the inculcation of national identity, eschewing the cultivation of diverse group identities. History and literature lessons formed the principal vehicles for purveying formal national identity, but after 1900 social studies also assumed this function to a considerable degree.[3] These lessons transmitted a unifying code of political beliefs and symbols. It shaped knowledge of the ideological principles of democratic government and republican citizenship.[4] The schools created a shared civic world-view that overarched group differences and served as a key to participation in nation building.[5]

After World War II, educators grew increasingly interested in how schools could positively reflect the historic ethnic diversity of the American nation. Educators sought to make learning about the nation's minorities a path toward creating greater democracy among individuals of different ancestry. By the late twentieth century, schools began to treat the cultivation of ethnic diversity as equivalent in importance to the guided development of national identity. This turning point reflected a historical trend in the wider society involving the deconstruction of nationhood and national identity and the recentering of ethnic and cultural identities around official group categories.

A persistent influence on the development of a model of national identity was the nation's historic condition of ethnic pluralism. Mass immigration expanded the variety of ethnic and racial groups continuously throughout national history. Of the major immigrant-receiving nations in the world from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, the United States absorbed the largest number of immigrants and the greatest variety of ethnic groups.[6] This historical condition inescapably complicated the formulation of national identity and its transmission through the schools.

As a consequence, to a large extent, the construction of national identity in the schools was an aspect of guided assimilation for the children of immigrants. This process turned on efforts to fulfill three conditions. First, the children of immigrants had to learn adequately the knowledge, attitudes, and values consonant with the exercise of citizenship. Second, when they came into the classroom students had to leave behind their ethnic identity and try to build a common public identity. Third, the schools had to re-equip themselves with instructional devices that would be more efficacious and suited for conditions of rising pluralism.

Efforts to achieve these ends evolved haphazardly over many decades and varied enormously in results according to locale and ethnic groupings. In the early twentieth century, both liberals who believed in the capacity of immigrants to become Americans and conservatives who demanded conformity to official Americanism worked to secure the cooperation of immigrant parents and their children to achieve the first and second conditions for participation in schooling.[7] By and large, immigrant parents adapted to the idea that their children should absorb the official culture of the host society through the pedagogical regimen of the school. The outcomes of this mutual adjustment between immigrants and educators, however, were not decisive or wholly satisfactory to either newcomers seeking to preserve their culture or Americanizers seeking to transform their identities.[8]

Efforts to fulfill the third condition--the production of effective scholastic methods for constructing national identity--hinged on a complex assemblage of educational policies and practices, some that were deeply rooted and historically evolved, and others that were innovative. The policy of using English as the sole language of instruction persisted from the first wave of school reform in the Jacksonian common-school movement. Monolinguistic English instruction seemed evermore necessary on practical grounds after 1890 because of the proliferation of ethnic diversity in the classroom during the arrival of the "New Immigrants" from southern and eastern Europe. Nevertheless, efforts were made in the late nineteenth century to install German, French, Polish, Italian, and Czech as languages of instruction.[9] By nearly universal practice, however, English became the unifying public language, the communicative and symbolic language for educationally constructed identity.[10] Another continuance of nineteenth-century practice was the usage of history as a homiletic device that producing an iconographic gallery of great statesmen and political achievements such as the American Revolution that would symbolize official national values such as democratic governance, individual rights, and legal equality.[11] To a large extent this approach was meant to inspire the shaping of character and patriotic attitudes.[12] Literature, music, art and flag ritual supplemented historical narrative with symbolic expressions of official American ideals and values.[13] In this style of civic acculturation, national identity was defined in terms of individual identity. The schools concentrated on making students see themselves as individual citizens as the hallmark of their national identity.[14]

Notwithstanding the continuing application of pedagogical legacies, educational policymakers implemented creative departures in the curriculum to teach national identity. These innovations made the learning of national identity a by-product of a new model of education called progressive education. Progressive education was a part of the reform movement known as progressivism. Progressives engaged schools to produce pragmatic citizens who would be active in the reorganization and modification of society along functionalist lines.[15] From the decade of World War I through the Great Depression, historians wrote new history textbooks that reflected the ideals of progressive citizenship. These texts described the features of intelligent government that guided the building of an American nation, but many also gave unprecedented coverage to the role of social and economic forces reshaping the institutions of governance.[16] Nevertheless, progressive educators had a shallow view of history.[17] They tended to view history instrumentally, promoting only an understanding of the past that would help solve contemporary problems. They reflected the view of the leading philosopher of progressive education, John Dewey, who instructed, "The true starting point of history is always some present situation with its problems."[18]

Progressive curricular changes were part of an effort to turn the school into a laboratory for learning the active role of citizens.[19] Spurred by Dewey's philsophy of pragmatism, progressive educators tried to join together the world of schooling and the world of experience. They encouraged students to gain a sense of participation in democracy by learning about the community in which they resided. Through this realistic orientation, the children of immigrants would develop a sense of national identity that rested on concrete engagement with the social and civic institutions of their communities.[20]

Progressive education proved to be a useful vehicle for assimilation. Although the policy advocated by Dewey before the First World War endeavored to make the school a tool for social reform, American educators applied it in such a way as to stress the role of schools in making the individual fit an efficient and reconstructed society.[21] Progressive schooling integrated by enlarging the civic identity and making it socially functional.[22] Progressive education thus lifted the teaching of national identity out of the moralistic realm of formal iconographic patriotism into the arena of civic problem solving for the modern age. At its most effective, it made the children of immigrants more aware of the rights and responsibilites conferred by membership in a democracy.[23] The individual citizen, not social and ethnic groups, constituted the progressive community that would carry out the scientific project of nation-building. Ethnic identity was irrelevant to the progressive model of educationally guided social reconstruction, because progressive citizenship subsumed and transcended subgroup identity. Citizenship would become an operational supra-identity that would be inclusive and integrative.

Progressives such as Theodore Roosevelt interpreted the American social milieu as a melting pot that would transform or "amalgamate" the immigrant. They differed from Anglo-Saxon restrictionists because they believed the immigrant had the capacity to become an American through voluntary cultural identification.[24] Some key historical textbooks written by progressives showed that immigrant newcomers were changing and adapting positively to conditions in the United States.[25]

The goals and techniques for cultivating national identity in the schools retained the imprint of progressive education through World War II. The war years, however, witnessed the emergence of a growing need to identify the international dimensions internal to American group life and external to the involvement of the United States in world affairs.[26] Educational theoreticians began to re-evaluate the notion of the melting-pot as a model for social evolution. They reinterpreted the melting pot as a coercive and homogenizing social design. In 1945, the yearbook of the National Council for the Social Studies presented a critical view of the melting pot as "an unwholesome standardization" detracting from "the continuation of the foreign heritage."[27] Educators began to call for the adoption of cultural pluralism in ethnic relations. A notion of democracy underlay their proposals. Cultural pluralism, they felt, was more consistent with democratic ideals because it endorsed the freedom of groups to determine their own cultural way of life. The movement toward education for cultural pluralism had roots in the intellectual ferment of the decades before World War II. The call for appreciation of foreign cultures derived from the earlier doctrine of liberal Americanizers such as Jane Addams contending immigrants brought cultural contributions that would enrich American society.[28] An approach called "intercultural education" began as early as the 1920s to urge teaching about ethnic diversity.[29]

The intellectual shift toward validating and encouraging cultural pluralism intertwined with wider movements toward decreasing prejudice and discrimination. World War II was a turning point in official attitudes toward ethnic and racial barriers. Government gradually increased efforts to promote intergroup toleration. Multinational cultural events occurred in several states to celebrate the ethnically diverse sources of national strength during the war.[30] After the war, various states founded government commissions to combat discrimination.[31] These official efforts toward improving intergroup relations relied on a central axiom concerning the role of education. Antidiscrimination was predicated on a confidence that social science could attack prejudice as a learned behavior which could be unlearned. Shortly after the war, a series of psychological studies identified prejudice as a socially constructed pathology that could be treated or prevented, to a degree.[32]

In a climate disposed toward encouraging intergroup tolerance, textbook writers entered into the business of educating for intergroup awareness and mutual understanding. The publisher, Ginn and Company, inaugurated the Tiegs-Adams Social Studies Series which included titles such as Your People and Mine and Your Country and Mine: Our American Neighbors. Published in 1949, Your People and Mine provided an overview of American history from the colonial era to the mid-twentieth century. It emphasized the joint effort of different social groups in the building of the American nation.[33]

To personalize this theme, the book was framed with a story of three boys: Peter, Pedro, and Pierre. In the Prologue called "Three Young Americans," the boys get acquainted on their families' visits to Mount Vernon, the home of George Washington. The boys exchange greetings and become friends. Peter Bradster, descendant of English settlers, learns that inspite of their different sounding names, Pierre and Pedro actually have the same name as his. The similarity of names among the boys symbolizes the underlying similarity of Americans despite the superficial difference of ancestry. Pierre and Pedro also open Peter's mind to how different geographic origins can accommodate an American national identity they all share:

"Peter, Pedro, Pierre," said Peter softly to himself. Aloud he asked, "Do you live in France, Pierre?"

"No," answered Pierre, "I am an American. I live in New Orleans."

"Where do you live, Pedro?" asked Peter.

"In California. I am an American, like you."

As a result of this conversation, Peter Bradster becomes newly conscious of the diverse characteristics of the crowd that has gathered to visit the national shrine of Mount Vernon:

Peter looked about. Many more people were now walking over the green lawns, big and little, old and young, black and white! Many of them did not even talk like Americans.

Peter wondered, "Do they call themselves Americans, too?"

He turned to his new friends and said proudly, "George Washington is the father of my country."

"Mine too," said Pedro.

"And mine," said Pierre.

The textbook concluded all three boys are correct in their identification with George Washington. The reason is that all Americans have been united by the common experience of immigration, resettlement and the shared activity of nation-building. "Their people, like yours and mine," we are told, "left old homes in other countries to build new ones in America. But they built more than homes. This is the story of how our people worked together and built one of the greatest nations on earth."

The story of "Three Young Americans" illustrated the lesson ideas employed by post-war textbooks to harmonize ethnic diversity with national identity. Peter, who represents the typical American of the younger generation, learns that despite superficial linguistic and geographic differences, Americans are united by a common civic culture of democratic institutions symbolized by the legacy of Washington. Furthermore, the three young American boys personify the waves of immigrants who built the American nation.

The central theme of "Three Young Americans"--how national identity arose out of the immigrant character of all Americans--reflected the positive vision of American ethnic history developing in the post-war decades. American intellectuals endorsed the view that immigration was a social good and was a defining ingredient of nationhood. Some discussed the validity of a pan-immigrant model to account for American national identity. The major social historian of the era, Oscar Handlin, charted the pivotal role of the immigrant experience in all group histories, including blacks and Puerto Ricans. He argued that the latter were united with the descendants of European immigrants in the common experiences of migration from a stagnant rural order to a modern urban world.[34] Nathan Glazer, perhaps the era's most influential sociologist of ethnic relations, viewed blacks and Puerto Ricans as the latest groups to follow the pathway taken by European immigrants.[35]

The history and social studies textbooks of the 1950s and 1960s began to express a benign form of free cultural pluralism that scholars such as Handlin and Glazer articulated.[36] While the melting pot described by policymakers in the early twentieth century stressed uni-directional and progressive melting toward Anglo-conformity, the free pluralism model tolerated multi-directional intergroup assimilation and voluntary ethnic identification. New textbooks showed that the American nation was defined by the mixture of different groups. They emphasized that despite dissimilar ancestries, all Americans were equal as citizens. Ethnic diversity was one aspect of the complex social character of the nation. As such it testified to the freedom under democracy given to groups to pursue their own way of life. It is important to note that many texts still supported the melting pot model, but the cutting edge of innovation was the concept of cultural pluralism.[37] An observation by Frances FitzGerald described the mixing of old and new ideas in the transitions of textbook writing: "[New] scholarship trickles down extremely slowly into the school texts . . . ."[38]

Jack Allen and Clarence Stegmeir's Civics, a secondary social studies textbook published by the American Book Company in 1956, reflected the trend toward endorsement of cultural pluralism.[39] Chapter 13, "Good Citizens Live and Work Together in Many Groups," announced in its heading, "America, no melting pot." The authors instructed that America is not a melting pot "in which people of many origins could be thoroughly mixed and molded into entirely new and different people." They allowed that this notion was once believed, but "We know better now." They explained:

> You can't melt persons as you would melt pieces of metal. And even if you could, what would you do with the resulting molten mass? Ladle it out into molds all of one kind? In someone's idea of an American mold, perhaps?
>
> Americans respect peoples of all races, colors, and creeds for what they are. They respect individual worth and personality. They don't want all Americans to be alike poured into the same mold and cooled in the same form.

Allen and Stegmeir suggested that the melting pot be replaced by a stew pot "in which meats, vegetables, and seasonings are cooked together to make a delicious dish--all the various ingredients contributing to the taste and nourishing qualities of the whole, yet each of them preserving its individuality." Ultimately, the authors concluded, neither the melting pot nor the stew pot was wholly "accurate," but both correctly captured the salutary multi-ethnic character of the nation: "all varieties of Americans have something of value to contribute to our democracy."[40] The reader was to understand that democracy grew stronger from ethnic diversity which, in turn, permitted the freedom of voluntary and self-determined identity. An epigraph to Chapter 13 made this clear:

We are a nation of nations

Out of many national origins, and out of many religious faiths, one nation has been created here--

The United States of America.

Americans live and work together in many different kinds of groups.

This chapter describes some of the groups in our country and lists some practical hints about how to become more useful members of groups as steps toward good citizenship.[41]

Despite these new efforts to portray diversity in its relation to nation building, the role and history of ethnic groups remained a very small part of curricula and textbook treatments in the years after World War II. Blacks appeared chiefly in the institutional history of slavery and Indians had a minor role in the account of colonization and westward expansion. Most textbooks devoted only a small amount of attention to immigration (Table 1). Mabel B. Casner and Ralph Henry Gabriel's The Story of Democracy allotted in 1949 only nine out of 624 pages to a discussion of immigration; Ralph Volney Harlow and

Table 1

Coverage of "Immigration" or "Immigrants" in American History Textbooks from 1949 to 1959.

Mabel B. Casner and Ralph H. Gabriel.
The Story of American Democracy.
New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1949.

(A) Pages on "Immigrants" or "Immigration": 9
(B) Total Pages of Text: 624
(C) Percentage of (A) out of (B): 1.4%

Ralph Volney Harlow and Ruth Elizabeth Miller.
Story of America. Rev. Ed. New York: Henry Holt, 1953.

(A) Pages on "Immigrants" or "Immigration": 7
(B) Total Pages of Text: 568
(C) Percentage of (A) out of (B): 1.2%

Henry W. Bragdon and Samuel P. McCutcheon,
History of a Free People. New York: Macmillan, 1954.

(A) Pages on "Immigrants" or "Immigration": 13
(B) Total Pages of Text: 675
(C) Percentage of (A) out of (B): 1.9%

Glenn W. Moon, Don C. Cline, and John H. MacGowan.
Story of Our Land and People. New York: Henry Holt, 1955.

(A) Pages on "Immigrants" or "Immigration": 8
(B) Total Pages of Text: 619
(C) Percentage of (A) out of (B): 1.3%

Gertrude Hartman.
America: Land of Freedom. 2nd. ed. Boston: D. C. Heath, 1957.

(A) Pages on "Immigrants" or "Immigration": 8
(B) Total Pages of Text: 698
(C) Percentage of (A) out of (B): 1.1%

Fremont P. Wirth.
United States History. Rev. ed.
New York: American Book Company, 1957.

(A) Pages on "Immigrants" or "Immigration": 17
(B) Total Pages of Text: 734
(C) Percentage of (A) out of (B): 2.3%

Note: (A) equals the number of pages listed in a textbook's index under the heads "Immigrants" or "Immigration."

Ruth Elizabeth Miller's Story of America published in 1953 gave only seven out of 568 pages to immigration. The percentage of text pages dealing with immigration in six important American history texts published from 1949 to 1959 ranged from 1.1 percent to 2.3 percent. Immigration was not treated as a centrally important force in the shaping of national history. It was merely a part of social history which in itself was subordinated to the grand saga of the rise of democratic institutions in which the American Revolution, the Civil War, and the creation of a liberal state dominated the narrative.

To the extent cultural pluralism was pictured in the 1950s and 1960s texts, it was seen as an aspect of the health of civil society under American democracy, where government permitted the private right of voluntary ethnic identification. Confidence in free pluralism drew on the feeling in the early Cold War era that the American institutions proven superior in the Second World War would also prevail against Communism because of their democratic character. The free pluralism model complemented the growing political movement of antidiscrimination. The elimination of prejudice and discrimination would create an arena in which tolerant and pluralistic ethnic relations could grow. Government would guarantee equal opportunity for individuals; it would not protect the privileges, the power, and the cultural interests of particular groups. History and civics texts envisioned the creation of free ethnic pluralism in the United States as an unfolding of the nation's destiny as a democracy.

The free pluralism ideology began to move into a sharper key in the 1960s as a result of pivotal historical events. Educators began to express dissatisfaction with the limited coverage of ethnic groups found in textbooks. They discussed possibilities for enlarging the representation of ethnic diversity. In 1963, Vincent R. Rogers and Raymond H. Muessig complained in The Social Studies about the failure of textbooks to address the need for a deeper understanding of the social and ethnic diversity shaping American life. They noted, "Too many texts are filled with slanted 'facts,' stereotypes, provincial and ethnocentric attitudes, and superficial, utopian discussions which skim over conditions as they actually exist in life today." They decried the presence of too many "characters in text" having "first names like Bill, Tom, and John, rather than Sid, Tony, and Juan and last names like Adams, Hill, and Cook rather than Schmidt, Podosky, and Chen." Rogers and Muessig deplored the portrayal of Americans as "white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant, white collar, and middle class," giving the impression that "all Americans live on wide, shady streets in clean suburban areas, occupy white Cape Cod style houses, drive new automobiles, have two children (a boy and a girl, of course) and own a dog."[42]

An optimistic and homogeneous image of American life seemed out of touch in the political climate of the 1960s when the crisis of war and racial revolution revealed the shortcomings of American society. The Vietnam War and the black power movement combined to undermine the positive conception of American institutions that underpinned the workings of free pluralism.[43] Anti-war critics and black power advocates portrayed American society as enduringly flawed by racism and capitalist exploitation. These developments prepared the way for the radicalization of opposition to the institutional foundations of American nationhood. Among these foundations was the idea of the melting pot.

As the radical social critique unfolded, the "melting pot" model was seen in increasingly negative terms.[44] In the most extreme attacks, it was seen either as an efficient and coercive dissolver of ethnic groups or as abject failure because groups remained unmelted and unequal.[45] Spokesmen for the descendants of European immigrants at hearings for the Ethnic Heritage Studies Act in 1970 attested to the harmful ways in which the dominant melting-pot ideology had stripped away their ethnic identities.[46] While representatives of European ethnic groups decried the cultural self-denial imposed by the melting pot, minority groups announced that the melting pot was inapplicable to their historical experiences. Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Native American militants conceded that the assimilation model or the melting pot may have worked for European immigrants, but it was irrelevant to their group experiences. Rejecting all assimilationist models, these advocates called for the adoption of a victimization-oppression model based on the theory of "internal colonialism."[47] They repudiated the view that blacks were on the path to assimilation such as the European immigrant population had travelled earlier. From the radicals' perspective, Asians and Hispanics were primarily seen not in terms of their social identity as immigrants but rather in terms of their racial identity as minorities. Studies that emphasized ethnocultural persistence, often represented in the form of resistance to oppressive assimilation under the hegemony of capitalism, gained prominence in the world of scholarship.[48]

The circles of debate over educational policy quickly joined the escalating attack on the melting pot and mounting efforts to sharpen cultural pluralism. In a 1970 volume on elementary school social studies, William W. Joyce wrote, "Our nation's experiences in minority group relations demonstrate that the proverbial American melting pot has been a colossal fraud, perpetrated by a dominant majority for the purpose of convincing society at large that all cultural groups, irrespective of race or ethnic origin, were in fact eligible for full and unrestricted participation in the social, economic, political, and religious life of this nation."[49] In 1972, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) published a manifesto endorsing what can be called a "strong" model of multicultural education. Called "No One Model American: A Statement on Multicultural Education," it was a remarkably prophetic and influential document expressing many tenets of strong multiculturalism that would be discussed and refined by educationalists in the subsequent two decades.[50]

"No One Model American" began by denouncing assimilation. It demanded that schools "not merely tolerate cultural pluralism," but "be oriented toward the cultural enrichment of all children and youth through programs rooted to the preservation and extension of cultural alternatives." The Statement defined four goals of multicultural schooling: "(1) the teaching of values which support cultural diversity and individual uniqueness; (2) the encouragment of the qualititative expansion of existing ethnic cultures and their incorporation into the mainstream of american socioeconomic and political life; (3) the support of explorations in alternative and emerging life styles; and (4) the encouragement of multiculturalism, multilingualism, and multidialectism." These goals viewed multiculturalism primarily as a means of cultural empowerment, not an academic tool for improving scholastic and civic knowledge. The Statement stressed, "Multicultural education reaches beyond awareness and understanding of cultural differences" and aims at "cultural equality."

To follow up on its multicultural Statement, The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education's Journal of Teacher Education published a "multicultural" symposium in 1973 to advocate a social studies approach that would heighten appreciation of group identity and culture.[51] The symposium opened with a guest editorial from William A. Hunter, President of the Association, declaring, "America's culture is unalterably pluralistic." Hunter charged that "historians and educators have either omitted or distorted the facts regarding American cultural diversity." He repeated the call sounded in "A Statement on Multicultural Education" for social reconstruction and transformation through multicultural approaches:

> The multicultural philosophy must permeate the entire American educational enterprise. To this end, we--the American people--must reclassify our entire societal and institutional objectives, rethink our educational philosophy. Assessment in light of these

concepts will lead to conceptualizing, developing, and designing restructured educational institutions. Curricula, learning experiences, the competencies of teaching professionals, whole instructional strategies--all must adjust to reflect and encompass cultural diversity.

By the early 1970s, influential figures in the world of education had fully articulated an oppositional ideology toward assimilationist models of schooling in ethnic diversity. It demanded that schools teach about ethnic identity and culture as part of their institutional transformation that would subserve social transformation. The components of this ideology maintained a powerful shaping influence over models of multicultural schooling proposed from the 1970s to the 1990s. They usually included the following tenets: The melting pot was not only a historical inaccuracy, it was a deceptive invention to gain acquiesance from ethnic minorities while concealing their domination by white elites. Minorities had to recover a knowledge of their true historical past, buried by the privileged focus on the melting pot. They could only achieve this by equipping the schools to enlarge knowledge and appreciation of ethnic identity. Without this service, students would be deprived of their cultural heritage. They would lack the self-esteem and self-knowledge that would aid them in organizing for individual and group empowerment.

The strong version of multiculturalism based on heightening group identities in order to effect social transformation was not translated immediately and wholesale into teaching or the curriculum. Frequently, textbooks and teachers guides supplied a kind of weak multiculturalism in which schooling provided greater knowledge of the ethnic diversity underlying American life to increase scholastic understanding about society's character. Furthermore, even in the late 1970s, the range of ethnic diversity portrayed in some of the most popular secondary history textbooks was fairly modest. In these volumes, American Indians and black slave society received increased treatment, but the handling of immigration hardly achieved greater depth than found in the textbooks of the 1950s. Asians and Hispanics received very minor attention. European immigration was discussed with little examination of specific ethnic groups or even the historically important differences between northern and western Europeans and southern and eastern Europeans. Secondary American history books continued to highlight the traditional achievements and turning points of nation building. They treated at length the political and institutional effects of the American Revolution and the Civil War.[52] The civics textbooks continued to concentrate on explaining the primary mechanisms and institutions of the American polity. They devoted little space to affirmative action and racial inequality.[53]

The 1980s, however, comprised a watershed in which ethnic-based curricula became a central force in curricular reform. California adopted a social studies-history framework in 1987 that portrayed the integral roles of ethnic minorities in the evolution of the state and nation.[54] New York state adopted a new social studies-history framework in 1991 reflecting the centrality of ethnic differences.[55]

An enormous impetus toward inventing and installing multicultural curricula also came from a crucial social change, the return of mass immigration. From the 1970s, annual totals for immigration climbed to levels that were reached in the late nineteenth century. For the first time in history, most of the immigrants came from outside Europe, especially from Latin America and Asia. Policymakers felt pressure to equip the schools with new lessons and texts suitable for guiding the assimilation of students who came from every part of the world.

Educational scholars embracing the strong multiculturalism model first advocated in 1972 by the AACTE's "No One Model American" formatted it to the opportunities for institutionalizing ethnic curricula growing from the 1970s to the 1980s.[56] Elementary social studies was particularly susceptible to this development. Geared toward teaching for simple awareness, it casually verged upon celebration and stereotyping of ethnic differences. An example of how elementary teaching could construct simplistic group identities was found in the "Illustrative Learning Activities" of John U. Michaelis's _Social Studies for Children_, a teacher training text (Table 2). Michaelis urged the adoption of these types of lessons because of the "high priority" to "developing an appreciation of one's own and other cultures and to eradicating racism, classism, sexism, ethnocentrism, prejudice, and discrimination."

Michealis's teacher handbook went further to propound the need to transform the entire school milieu to accomplish this task. "The school environment and the hidden as well as the

Table 2

Activities for Multicultural Education

In early grades, identify and value unique characteristics and individual differences among members of one's class and members of other groups:

1. Make and share "me books" in which each child includes pictures and drawings that show "what is special (unique) about me," including age, height, weight, and skin color; liked and disliked foods; favorite toys, games, television programs, and other items; things that make me happy and sad; size and composition of my family.

2. Make and share books that show unique characteristics, customs, and behavior of a child in a different ethnic group or culture, similar in format to the "me books" noted above.

3. Make comparative picture charts that show what is unique or special about my family and a family from a different ethnic group.

4. Complete statements such as these:
    A family can be made up of ________________________.
    Special things about my family are ________________.
    Special things about other families are __________.
    Foods my family likes are _________________________.
    Foods other families like are _____________________.

5. Make picture charts or booklets of various ethnic groups here and in other lands to show how basic common needs for food, shelter, clothing, and security are met in a variety of different ways.

6. Make comparative charts that show what other ethnic groups like, with emphasis on why they like them just as we like certain things:

	Group A Likes	Group B Likes
Food		
Games		
Toys		
Etc.		

Source: John U. Michaelis, *Social Studies for Children: A Guide to Basic Instruction*, 7th ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1980), p. 205.

visible curriculum," he urged, "should be attuned to ethnic pluralism, learning styles and cultures of children from various groups, local conditions and resources, and ethnic group languages." The consequences of this institutionalized transformation would go far beyond improvement in scholastic knowledge to the heightening of ethnic consciousness and the empowering of group difference. The multicultural school, according to Michaelis, pursued these goals:

> To apply thinking and decision-making processes to ethnic issues through such activities as differentiating facts from interpretations and inferences, interpreting events from various ethnic perspectives, making cross-cultural analysis and syntheses of data, proposing action programs, and evaluating proposals and actions . . .
>
> To develop skills needed for participating in different ethnic groups, for communicating with both majority and minority groups, for resolving conflicts and for taking action to improve current conditions . . .
>
> To develop attitudes, values and behavior supportive of cultural diversity and ethnic differences, a willingness to combat racism and prejudice, each student's self-concept, respect for individual differences, a sense of political efficacy, and appreciation of diversity as a factor in cultural enrichment.[57]

Michaelis's lessons were indicative of the path educators were paving to deal with ethnic diversity in the classroom. It was built on an idealized and uncritical view of the consequences of cultivating ethnic or racial consciousness. Michaelis's lessons to nurture ethnic awareness were examples of pedagogical tendencies criticized by historian Stephan Thernstrom when he pointed out in 1985, "[The] current fashion of asking students 'who they are' and encouraging them to explore their ethnic roots can also be carried too far. Too often, it is assumed that we all are or should be ethnics." Indeed, a romantic, idealized view of the benign qualities of ethnic or national identity affected early multiculturalism. The extent to which it could be a force contibuting to guilty, aggressive, or divisive feelings was not examined by multiculturalists in a rigorous, self-critical way. Thernstrom cautioned, "As the example of Lebanon reveals so clearly, ethnic awareness is not necessarily benign and colorful. It can be enormously destructive if cultivated to the point at which a sense of the ties that bind a nation together is lost."[58]

Despite such prudent observations, educationalists took to new heights the methods for transforming the school into a multicultural vehicle. A scholar at the University of Washington, James A. Banks, led the way. In numerous articles and books, Banks presented an organizational plan to install the strong multicultural agenda for social transformation earlier announced by AACTE in 1973.[59] Multicultural schooling, he found, had a cardinal role in world-wide "ethnic revitalization" movements. Banks advised a "multi-factor, holistic paradigm," a "change strategy that reforms the total school environment in order to implement multicultural education successfully." He envisioned a total reconstruction of the school staff, its attitudes and values, institutional norms and values, assessment and testing procedures, curricular and teaching materials, linguistic modes, teaching and motivational styles, and the relative status of cultures. The widespread acceptance of multicultural totalism was shown in an announcement in the American history syllabus for the City of New York for 1990, "In the final analysis, all education should be multicultural education."[60]

The plans for institutionalizing multiculturalism in the 1980s assumed the primacy of ethnic and racial experience in shaping personal development. Frequently this premise was couched in terms of declarations of the inevitability of diversity. The New York state elementary social studies program advised teachers to help students acquire "a growing capacity to accept diversity as inevitable and natural."[61] Multicultural educators urged schools to make students aware of ethnic differences and identities, as a top priority. They contended that students--particularly those who were white--would learn about the diversity of other group experiences and perspectives, thus lessening the formation of prejudice and intolerance. New York State's "Curriculum of Inclusion" announced that as a result of multicultural education "children from European cultures would have a less arrogant perspective."[62] Furthermore, the cultivation of ethnic identity in the schools had beneficial effects on learning. The therapeutic character of multicultural schooling would enable students to gain self-esteem that in turn would produce confidence and interest in learning.

Because the goals of multiculturalism had a subjective character, they unavoidably involved inner effects that were hard to deal with rationally or empirically such as group pride, sensitivity, resentment, and oppressor guilt. The endeavor to increase knowledge of other cultures easily slipped into demands for "competence" in other cultures and "respect" for their equality. These basically subjective criteria encouraged education which dwelled on eliciting "feelings" and "sensitivity" from both cultural insiders and outsiders rather than the attainment of objective scholastic knowledge.

The notion that schooling should raise self-esteem had roots in the privileging of subjective and psychological states that supplied a sense of group security, a widely noted development in American culture after World War II. The subjective quest for peer-group acceptance and dependency examined by cultural critics such as David Riesman shaped the socialization experiences of the generation growing up in middle-class communities and post-progressive schools in the 1950s and 1960s.[63] Members of the "baby boom" generation took from their upbringing a view that feeling part of a group was necessary for a positive sense of identity. Although it is difficult to demonstrate precise patterns of cause and effect, those who entered the field of education appear to have taken a deeply rooted sensitivity to group-identity issues into their efforts to deal with ethnic diversity in the classroom. It made personal sense to many of them that schooling should properly cultivate group identity and self-esteem. In addition, minority radicals began to criticize assimilationist or "integrationist" identity as based on a sense of inferiority. They began to call for psychological liberation from a "colonized" self-image and to urge the strengthening of racial identity and pride.[64]

The cultural quest for self-esteem had complex and nebulous origins, but it crystallized easily as a form of simple justice on the political agenda of minority liberation politics. The necessity for it was regarded as self-evident. Ethnic leaderships advocated the equality of group esteem as a cardinal aspect of empowerment and welfare.[65] So did the major organizations influencing the teaching of history and social studies in the schools. The Organization of American Historians issued a "Statement on Multicultural History Education" announcing, "Because history is tied up with a people's identity it is legitimate that minority groups, women, and working people celebrate and seek to derive self-esteem from aspects of their history."[66] The view that schools had a duty to cultivate group-centered feelings and sensitivities reflected an intensifying subjectivism in race relations. In its most extreme forms, this heightened subjectivity was receptive to new mythic themes hinging on crude moral judgments. The movement disparaging the Columbian quincentenary spawned new anti-western themes predicated on the moral elevation of American Indians and Africans over Europeans.[67] Asa Hilliard, an educational psychologist, and Leonard Jeffries, the head of the Afro-American program at City College of New York, invented a mythic source of black cultural and ethical superiority in their Afro-centric model of ancient Egyptian civilization.[68]

Perhaps the change in the political climate having the most important influence on the evolution of multicultural education was the rise of official minority-group identity. Official group identity, to the extent that it has evolved since the 1960s, represented a movement away from inclusive citizenship in a unitary political community toward separate subnational status. Individual opportunity and private rights in the sphere of civil society were to be replaced by official group rights in a politicized domain of ethnic identities and relations. The division of the nation into separate official groups gained ground in various ways. The adoption of preferential policies, variously labelled affirmative action and including bilingual education, necessitated the formulation of official identities as an entry key to programs.[69] The census bureau and government agencies began to count and classify groups so as to preserve the permanent and separate identity of Asians, blacks, and Hispanics.[70] The recentering of ethnic identity around official and political status required reductionist shortcuts where subgroups and nationalities were oddly homogenized. Incongruent combinations occurred such as the merging of Koreans and Samoans into an Asian Pacific bloc and the molding of Hispanics of a variety of racial origins into a unitary Hispanic bloc. Advocates justified official identity as "people of color" on the grounds of common victimhood. The creation of official non-white groups implicitly created an official white group and exaggerated its historical unity. The official minority viewpoint tended to overlook the history of racial discrimination against European immigrants.[71] From the perspective of official minorities, European ethnic groups were homogenized into a white racial bloc with separate and conflicting interests from non-white minorities. The movement toward official groups sharpened boundaries between all groups, but especially between whites and non-whites, and reduced their inherent heterogeneity into a category.[72] This racial typology and the official identities it formulated deeply influenced the reconceptualization of ethnicity in multicultural education.

In the midst of these developments, history and social studies textbooks in the 1980s stepped up their coverage of ethnic groups. The American Dream, by Lew Smith, adumbrated this trend. The 1980 edition consisted of a sketchy chronological presentation of traditional American history joined to a set of readings illustrating the social experiences of different groups. It devoted a large portion of pictures and text to Indians, slaves, and immigrants.[73] The multi-authored textbook, Civics: Citizens in Action, supplied discussions of affirmative action and ethnic discrimination; it included many minorities in pictures of Americans engaged in their roles as citizens.[74] The enlargement of group roles and identities often portrayed ethnicity in terms of inclusion and integration, as merely one ingredient in the wider processes of community building and nation building. Margaret Branson's America's Heritage gave immigrants and racial minorities coverage to locate the roles they held in common with all groups in the achievements of national history.[75] The innovative Houghton-Mifflin social studies series likewise supplied detailed treatment of American Indians, African slaves, and immigrants from worldwide homelands as part of a nationalizing experience.[76] Elementary social studies also reflected an enormous enlargement of the presentation of diversity. Illustrations, photographs and stories portraying diverse minorities emphasized their involvement in universal roles and activities. The new presence of minorities in texts portrayed the United States as a harmonious multi-racial society.[77]

One formula that produced an inclusive framework for group history in the era of multiculturalism was the further extension of the pan-immigrant model. To Form a More Perfect Union by David A. Bice announced, "All Americans are immigrants or the descendants of immigrants." Even Native Americans were immigrants. Like the waves of migrants who came afterwards, they were drawn by the magnetic forces of "push" and "pull." They left an unsatisfactory situation for better opportunities in North America. Bice explained, "Finding food was difficult in Asia, so prehistoric people were pulled to North America by following animals who had found better feeding grounds. A long time later these Americans were joined by people on the move from the continent of Europe." Blacks were immigrants, too, according to Bice, but they were forced to emigrate, the "exception to the idea that people move because they are pushed from one place and pulled to another."[78] Lew Smith's The American Dream indicated that all Americans were immigrants by a reference to all waves of migrants from English colonization onward as "non-Indian immigrants." According to Smith, the "The first non-Indian immigrants to the United States came in groups of a hundred or two at a time in the early 1600s."[79] In the pan-immigrant approach to American ethnic history exemplified by Bice's and Smith's texts, all groups including Indians and slaves were united by the common experiences of immigration, settlement, and the joint effort of building communities and the nation's institutions.

The expansion of immigrant identity reflected the search for a new unifying model of national identity. It sought to teach youngsters that they were all Americans because they were united by experiences held in common as immigrants and their descendants. In a sense, this was a pedagogical revisioning of Oscar Handlin's insight that "the immigrants _were_ American history."[80] This theme had been invoked in a more limited way by textbooks in the 1950s such as the aforementioned _Your People and Mine_, but the social studies-history curricula of the 1980s and 1990s magnified its articulation through a vast expansion of historical information and symbolic representation of ethnic groups.

Another formula to organize the various ethnic strands of American society flowed out of the repudiation of the melting pot model. The decline of the melting pot prepared the way for recharting the image of American society as a mosaic of separate and discrete ethnic elements. This ethnic model generated tendencies toward proportional group representation in the teaching of history and social studies. The making of group representation into a historiographic principle owed indirectly to a pivotal change in historical scholarship starting in the 1960s emphasizing the need to rewrite history "from the bottom up."[81] This intellectual movement inaugurated a wave of scholarship on the working class, women, and ethnic minorities that powerfully expanded knowledge of the evolutionary dynamics forming American society.[82] But in the hands of those interested in pedagogical utilitarianism, the new social history was vulnerable to degeneration into a form of mechanical tokenism. Proportional ethnic representation in texts and curricula became a kind of historiographic quota or equity principle used to counteract the omission or marginalization of non-European groups as causative agents in traditional historical accounts. As George W. Maxim explained the situation to be corrected in _Social Studies and the Elementary School Child_, "Although America has been known as a great _melting pot_, the virtues and achievements of the dominant Anglo-American sector of society were historically revered, while those of the Afro-American, the Native American, the Chicano, and the Oriental were neglected."[83]

Many textbooks by the late 1970s appeared to rest on a hierarchy of textual and visual space quotas. Blacks received the most coverage, Indians were second, European immigrants followed, while Asians and Hispanics received the slimmest treatments. Ethnic studies by proportional representation had built-in intellectual limitations. It substituted for a probing analysis of ethnicity a mechanical and token listing of group role models and homogenized group profiles which usually stressed victimization. Moreover, this approach to maintaining different ethnic presences in history obscured the dynamic relations of groups to each other and to larger historical patterns.[84]

Perhaps the greatest problem with proportional representation, however, was its potential to encourage treating history as a group possession. Entitlement of place in history led to demands for historical equity which groups began to see as a right, as something they should control. As such, history became a group possession. Insiders had a special claim to authority about group history and they would compete against outsiders to construct it and transmit in their own way. American history parcellized according to ethnicity and race turned into a battleground on which groups defined and asserted for political purposes their own vision of group history. Advocates of multiculturalism used the revising of the history-social studies framework for New York state in 1989 as a drive to empower minority cultures.[85] In California, advocates of a history defined and controlled by internal group perspective protested the state's adoption of the Houghton-Mifflin history-social studies textbooks that dealt saliently with ethnic groups, but in the framework of a nationalizing and inclusive experience.[86]

The cultivation of multicultural identities possessed a functionalism within the developed forms of group-identity politics, although teachers of multiculturalism often treated diversity as an aspect of individual student identity and neglected a systematic theory of pluralism in which it would play a vital role.[87] Strong multicultural education resonated with social policies and political agendas predicated on group identity such as preferential policies labelled affirmative action. Since preferential policies organized access to opportunity and status according to group identities and representations, to the extent that multicultural education cultivated them it helped reconfigure power along pluralistic lines. Multicultural education possessed the potential to form the building blocks of identity necessary to enrolling future generations as members of official groups. This outcome can be described as the pluralistic functionalism of multicultural education. Multiculturalism appears to have already assumed this role in schools in various localities. In many communities, the teaching of whole group identities and cultures is underway or being installed.[88] The New York State Social Studies Program in 1988 advised teachers to "Stress ethnic customs and traditions that are learned and passed down from generation to generation."[89] The history course of study for the New York City public schools in 1990 instructed, "Multicultural education first requires that students build an awareness of their own cultural heritage . . . ."[90] In the most extreme applications of multiculturalism, pluralistic functionalism spilled over into a separatist functionalism that nurtured exclusive group cultures.[91]

Some of the problematic qualities of strong multicultural education can be probed by a set of comparisons with the Americanization movement and progressive education. Strong multiculturalists and Anglo-Saxon Americanizers shared a belief in the existence of reductionist collective identities. While the latter urged adherence to a superior Anglo-Saxon cultural ideal, the former endeavored to formularize and celebrate ethnic identities. In other words, strong multiculturalists, like conservative Americanizers, endorsed a filiopietistic view of group identity. As a consequence, both sought to enhance self-approving and uncritical orientations in education. For example, the former urged "sensitivity" and "self-esteem" and the latter "patriotism" and "Americanism." In another area of comparison, strong multiculturalists resembled progressive educators in subordinating intellectualism to presentism, making learning subserve the concern with current social problems.[92] They also resembled progressives in anticipating that the implementation of their programs would produce a reconstructed society harmonizing all factors, which the historian Richard Hofstadter criticized as the utopian fallacy of progressive schooling.[93] While progressive educators endeavored to achieve this by expanding citizenship, multiculturalists aimed at social transformation through intensification of group identity. However, in contrast to the centered transformation produced by national identification under Americanization and civic identification under progressivism, strong multiculturalism encouraged a decentered transformation through subnational identification. The purposes of strong multicultural education, culled out by juxtaposition with Americanization and progressive education, reveal its features fostering separatism, anti-intellectualism, and artificial identities.

Many scholars were troubled by these problematic qualities of multicultural education. Critics early on found the quest for self-esteem unattainable or unproductive of better learning. In a Saturday Review article in 1968, Larry Cuban asserted that whether the installation of ethnic content "will raise self-esteem or invest youngsters with dignity is debatable."[94] Albert Shanker, head of the American Federation of Teachers, doubted that schooling in group pride and perspectives would enhance learning and worried about its divisive effects.[95]

The most trenchant examinations of multicultural education came from scholars concerned with its impact on the cohesion of a multi-ethnic and multi-racial nation. Many of these thinkers found it useful for students to study the various ethnic strands in American history. Some could accept a weak multiculturalism based on a nationalizing and inclusive vision to improve a student's knowledge of the complex character of American society. The educational historian Diane Ravitch in 1990 endorsed this form as "pluralistic multiculturalism."[96] These scholars worried about strong multiculturalism--what Ravitch called "particularistic multiculturalism"--because of its emphasis on ethnic differences, separatism, relativism, and subjective elements like "self-esteem," and filiopietism. They were troubled by how easily multiculturalists crossed into the area of inventing cultures and identities, how willingly they substituted a nebulous relativism (the New York State "Curriculum of Inclusion" assumed that all cultures were arranged in "a round table") for unifying and ordered relations. They saw a danger that schools would further the division of society into separate cultures, producing the loss of community and heightening ethnic conflict. Frances FitzGerald worried that the message of multicultural texts would be that "Americans have no common history, no common culture, and no common values, and that membership in a racial or cultural group constitutes the most fundamental experience of each individual."[97] Hazel Hertzberg likewise was concerned in 1981 that the installation of "the New History" of social groups undermined the coherent understanding of national history.[98] Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., criticized in 1991 the multicultural social studies framework of New York State as a dangerous step toward the "decomposition" of the nation through the cultivation of separate group identities.[99]

Perhaps the most far-seeing criticisms came from two Harvard scholars who worried about the way multicultural schooling could artificially harden and rigidify a historical matrix of fluid ethnic relations. While approving the New York framework, the sociologist Nathan Glazer gravely warned, "we fall into the danger, by presenting a conception of separate and different groups fixed through time as distinct elements, in our society, of making our future one which conforms to our teaching, of arresting the processes of change and adaptation that have created a common society, a single nation."[100] Stephan Thernstrom, the historian and editor of The Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups, saw schooling in multicultural identities as analogous to schooling in religious identities, a problematic and controversial topic that was best kept out of schools in a culturally diverse nation. Adopting an international perspective, Thernstrom suggested that to let schools privilege ethnic identities was incongruent with the historical weakness of ethnic boundaries in America and would superimpose sharp and hard group identities more characteristic of Lebanon or Yugoslavia.[101]

Recent events indicated that even some of the earliest proponents of multicultural education have begun to criticize their own policies somewhat along the lines laid out by Thernstrom and Glazer. In California, in the wake of numerous racial clashes in public schools and the Los Angeles riot, educators and scholars felt the need to call for a re-appraisal of multicultural education. They acknowledged the evidence that multicultural schooling intensified ethnic divisions by stressing group pride and exclusive identities. Students exposed to the prevailing multicultural curriculum concurred that they had experienced these effects. Educators felt reluctant to abandon multiculturalism but considered how it could be revised to emphasize more inclusion and cross-group experiences. Their remarks indicated a new interest in finding ingredients for a broader form of identity.[102]

In the 1990s, whether democratic universalism can survive the threat of parochial movements in an age of rising pluralism is already a vital question. And it is directly related to how schools handle ethnic and national identities. Xenophobia, nativism, and isolationism have resurged; group-identity politics continued to produce conflict and division. The new efforts to construct national identity and diversity will defuse these threatening tendencies only insofar as schools provide scholastic knowledge of diversity that treats it as part of the integrative and inclusive patterns of American history. It is useful for students to know about the ethnic strands, but they need to know how they were woven into the fabric of a much greater whole.[103] Each social part has drawn its meaning from the national whole, and the qualities of the whole have been impressed on each part.[104] Only by helping students to understand these mutual relations can American schools teach successfully about diversity.

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CHAPTER 6

MULTICULTURALISM AND HISTORY: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES AND PRESENT PROSPECTS

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"The civil rights battles of the '50s and '60s were fought in the courtroom," says David Nicholson of the Washington Post, "but in the '90s the struggle for cultural parity will take place in the classroom as blacks and other minorities seek to change what their children are taught."[1] Now, only two years into the decade, the swirling multicultural debate around the country is proving Nicholson correct. But the debate has gone far beyond the subject of what is taught and has led to some remarkable--and sometimes troubling--notions of what we are as a people and a society.

Often lost in the present furor is even an elementary sense of how far the writing and teaching of history has moved away from the male-oriented, Eurocentric, and elitist approaches that had dominated for so long at all levels of the American educational system. It is important to understand this because new calls for change often ignore what has already occurred in the rethinking and rewriting of history and, in so doing, sometimes prescribe new formulae that contain hidden dangers.

REIMAGINING THE PAST

Among academic historians, agreement is widespread today that history has been presented--whether in school textbooks, college courses, museum exhibits, or mass media--in a narrow and deeply distorted way, not just in the United States but in every country. In the 1930s, when he was writing Black Reconstruction, W. E. B. Du Bois wrote: "I stand at the end of this writing, literally aghast at what American historians have done to this field . . . [It is] one of the most stupendous efforts the world ever saw to discredit human beings, an effort involving universities, history, science, social life, and religion."[2] Few white historians would have agreed with Du Bois at the time, for in fact he was attacking their work. But a half-century later, the white president of the Organization of American Historians, Leon Litwack, agreed with this assessment. In his presidential address in 1987, Litwack charged that "no group of scholars was more deeply implicated in the miseducation of American youth and did more to shape the thinking of generations of Americans about race and blacks than historians."[3]

Such charges of miseducation can be readily confirmed by looking at a few of the most widely used textbooks in American history. David Muzzey's various American history textbooks for the schools made African Americans completely invisible. As Frances Fitzgerald has written, slaves "appeared magically in this country at some unspecified time and had disappeared with the end of the Civil War."[4] Slavery was a political problem for white men to worry about; but slaves and free blacks were neither a social group with their own history of struggle and survival nor an economic and cultural force that helped shape American society.

Though most textbooks followed Muzzey in making slaves and free blacks disappear, a few college textbooks, beginning in the 1930s, introduced Africans in America as a distinct people with their own history. But the slaves turned out to be contented workers through a fortuitous combination of European and African cultural characteristics: European masters, coming from enlightened cultural stock, were generally considerate of their slaves; and Africans, coming from a retrograde cultural stock, were pleased to trade barbaric Africa for the civilized European colonies in the Americas. Oliver Chitwood, publishing his college textbook on American history in 1931 and leaving it virtually unchanged through the 1960s, informed students that:

"Generally, when the master and slave were brought into close association, a mutual feeling of kindliness and affection sprang up between them, which restrained the former from undue harshness toward the latter . . . We find that there were always some brutal masters who treated their black servants inhumanely, but they were doubtless few in number. . . Good feeling between master and slave was promoted in large measure by the happy disposition or docile temperament of the Negro. Seldom was he surly and discontented and rarely did he harbor a grudge against his master for depriving him of his liberty. On the contrary, he want about his daily tasks cheerfully, often singing while at work . . . The fact that he had never known the ease and comforts of civilization in his homeland made it less difficult for him to submit to the hardships and inferior position of his condition. In this respect, the American Negro was better off than the slave of ancient Rome, who was often the intellectual equal and sometimes the superior of his master."[5]

Chitwood's message for college undergraduates took some time to percolate down to the precollegiate textbooks, but at least as early as 1947 it had appeared in My Country, a fifth grade textbook published by the state of California. For years thereafter, thousands of children learned about slavery and slave life from these passages:

"The Negroes were brought from Africa and sold to the people of our country in early times. After a while there came to be thousands and thousands of these Negro slaves. Most of them were found in the southern states. On the southern plantations, whre tobacco and cotton and rice were grown, they worked away quite cheerfully. In time many people came to think that it was wrong to own slaves. Some of them said that all the Negro slaves should be freed. Some of the people who owned slaves became angry at this. They said that the black people were better off as slaves in America than they would have been as wild savages in Africa. Perhaps this was true, as many of the slaves had snug cabins to live in, plenty to eat, and work that was not too hard for them to do. Most of the slaves seemed happy and contented." As for slave children, life was a bowl of cherries: "Perhaps the most fun the little [white] masters and mistresses have comes when they are free to play with the little colored boys and girls. Back of the big house stand rows of small cabins. In these cabins live the families of Negro slaves. The older colored people work on the great farm or help about the plantation home. The small black boys and girls play about the small houses. They are pleased to have the white children come to play with them."[6]

The narrow and distorted lenses through which historians looked for years--which in the main reflected the dominant biases of white, Protestant America--extended far beyond the history of black Americans. Du Bois would surely have been equally dismayed if he had read one of the most widely used books in Western Civilization courses in the 1960s, where the much honored British historian, Hugh Trevor-

Roper magisterially proclaimed that it was useless to study African history (or presumably the history of several other parts of the world outside Europe) because this would only be to inquire into "the unrewarding gyrations of barbarous tribes whose chief function in history . . . is to show to the present an image of the past from which, by history, it has escaped."[7]

Similar mental constructions prevailed in regard to Native American history. In introducing Douglas Leach's history of King Philip's War in 1676, the bloodiest Indian war of the seventeenth century in North America, Samuel Eliot Morison, writing in 1958, instructed readers how to view both colonial-Indian relations and the decolonization movements in the Third World after World War II: "In view of our recent experiences of warfare, and of the many instances today of backward peoples getting enlarged notions of nationalism and turning ferociously on Europeans who have attempted to civilize them, this early conflict of the same nature cannot help but be of interest."[8]

Imbedded in the controlling idea that European-Native American relations revolved around the confrontation of savagery and civilization lay the idea that conflict between higher and lower cultures was inevitable and that the outcome was foreordained. Muzzey's books, the historical primers for millions of American children for two generations from the 1920s to the 1960s, wrote: "It was impossible that these few hundred thousand natives should stop the spread of the Europeans over the country. That would have been to condemn one of the fairest lands of the earth to the stagnation of barbarism."[9] Dozens of other books followed the same basic formula that neatly placed the responsibility for what happened in history upon impersonal or super-personal forces, eliminating the notion of individual or group responsibility because what happened, and they way it happened, was seen as the result of forces that mere man could not alter. As Isaiah Berlin tells us, historical explanations that stress inevitability are the victor's way of disclaiming responsibility for even the most heinous chapters of history. Once inevitability has been invoked, "our sense of guilt and of sin, our pangs of remorse and self-condemnation, are automatically dissolved . . . The growth of knowledge brings with it relief from moral burdens, for if powers beyond and above us are at work, it is wild presumption to claim responsibility for their activity or blame ourselves for failing in it . . . Acts hitherto regarded as wicked or unjustifiable are seen in a more 'objective' fashion--in the larger context--as part of the process of history . . . ."[10]

The paradigmatic shift in the writing of history is far from complete, but some of those who currently protest about Eurocentric or racist history take little account of how resolutely the present generation of historians--scholars and teachers alike--have come to grips with older conceptualizations of history. Academic historians, most of them detached from what is going on in the primary and secondary schools of the country unless they have school age children enrolled in public schools, are often puzzled by the furor over the question of "whose history shall we teach" because they have watched--and participated in--wholesale changes in their own discipline in the last thirty years or so. African and African American history, women's history, and labor history are taught in most colleges and universities; Asian American, Hispanic American, and Native American history are taught in many. These courses are built on an outpouring of scholarship in this generation.

African American history can be taken as an instructive example. Even fifteen years ago, John Hope Franklin, author of the leading textbook in African American history, wrote of "a most profound and salutary change in the approach to the history of human relations in the United States." He noted that in the process of this change "the new Negro history has come into its own."[11] Since 1977, this blossoming of black history has continued unabated. In compiling a bibliography of African American history for just the period from 1765 to 1830 for the forthcoming _Harvard Guide to Afro-American History_, I tracked down over 200 books and more than 1,200 articles published since 1965. The proliferation of scholarship for the period after 1830 is even greater. When the _Harvard Guide_ is completed, it will detail thousands of books, articles, and doctoral dissertations--an enormous outpouring of scholarship that has wrought fundamental changes in the basic architecture of American history.

In women's history, the amount and range of scholarship--and sophisticated courses built upon it--is equally impressive. The biannual Berkshire COnference of Women's Historians is a flourishing enterprise that draws hundreds of historians together and serves as a showplace of exciting new scholarship. So too, younger scholars are building on the work of a few old hands to create the knowledge for a thorough understanding of the history, literature, art, music and values of Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and other groups. It is a measure of how the historical profession has changed that so many of the book prizes awarded by the Organization of American Historians in recent years have gone to books about the struggles of racial groups and women in the making of American society.

In the current atmosphere of heated debate, it is worth some reflection on why and how such wholesale change has occurred in the writing of history. Four developments have intersected to cause a major transformation. First--and largely forgotten in the current debates--is the change in the recruitment of professional historians--the people who do historical scholarship, teach at the collegiate level, and, ultimately, are responsible for the textbooks used in the schools. Before World War II, professional historians were drawn almost exclusively from the ranks of white, male, Protestant, and upper-class American society. From their perspective, it was entirely fitting that they should be the keepers of the past because they believed that only those of the highest intellect, the most polished manners, and the most developed aesthetic taste could stand above the ruck and look dispassionately at the annals of human behavior. Such a view conformed precisely to the centuries-old view of the elite that ordinary people were ruled by emotion and only the wealthy and educated could transcend this state and achieve disinterested rationality. Pitted against this thoroughly dominant group since the early nineteenth century was a small number of women, African Americans, and white radicals who worked without much recognition as they tried to create alternative histories.

Small cracks in the fortress of the historical profession began to appear in the 1930s as Jews struggled for a place in the profession. Peter Novick's book on the historical profession, That Noble Dream: The 'Objectivity Question' and the American Historical

Profession (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), gives a vivid picture of the way the profession grudgingly yielded to Jewish aspirations. When applying for his first teaching job, Richard Leopold--who would emerge as a major historian of diplomacy--was described by a graduate mentor at Harvard as "of course a Jew, but since he is a Princeton graduate, you may be reasonably certain he is not of the offensive type." Bert Lowenberg was described in a letter of recommendation as follows: "by temperament and spirit . . . [he] measures up to the whitest Gentiles I know."[12]

Not until after World War II would more than a handful of Jews gain admission to the historical profession. By that time, the GI bill was opening the doors of higher education to broad masses of Americans. This enormous expansion, which created a majority of the college campuses existing today, rapidly enlarged and diversified the historians' guild. Religious barriers continued to fall and class barriers began to fall as well, though not without creating consternation in many quarters. At Yale, George Pierson, the chairman of the history department wrote the university's president in 1957--in a period when the growth of American universities demanded thousands of newly trained professors--that while the doctoral program in English "still draws to a degree from the cultivated, professional, and well-to-do classes . . . by contrast, the subject of history seems to appeal on the whole to a lower social stratum." Pierson complained that "far too few of our history candidates are sons of professional men; far too many list their parent's occupation as janitor, watchman, salesman, grocer, pocketbook cutter, bookkeeper, railroad clerk, pharmacist, clothing cutter, cable tester, mechanic, general clerk, butter-and-egg jobber, and the like." Five years later, Carl Bridenbaugh, the president of the American Historical Association, lamented what he called "The Great Mutation" that he believed was undermining the profession. "Many of the younger practitioners of our craft, and those who are still apprentices, are products of lower middle-class or foreign origins, and their emotions not infrequently get in the way of historical reconstructions."[13]

The notion that lower-class and foreign-born backgrounds disabled apprentice historians by conditioning them to substitute emotion for reason was revived when racial and gender barriers began to fall in the 1960s. The historical profession had for many decades included a small number of notable women and African Americans, and an occasional Native American, Hispanic American, and Asian American. But women began to enter the profession in substantial numbers only in the 1960s, while members of racial minority groups have increased since that time only slowly. Charges that emotions outran analytic insight were again heard from members of the old guard, none of its members more vocal than Oscar Handlin, whose Jewish background had nearly stopped him from entry into the profession a generation before.[14] But by this time, the old guard had been swamped, and social history had surged forward to displace the traditional emphasis on male- and elite-centered political and institutional history and an intellectual history that rarely focused on the thought and consciousness of people who were not of European descent.

Given these changes in the composition of the profession, which by 1990 had made women more than 35 percent of all graduate students in the humanities, it is not surprizing that new questions have been posed about the past--questions that never occurred to a narrowly constituted group of historians. The emphasis on conflict rather than consensus, on racism and exploitation, on history from the bottom up rather than the top down, on women as well as men, is entirely understandable as people whose history had never been written began challenging prevailing paradigms by recovering their own histories. Step by step, new historians (including many white males) have constructed previously untold chapters of history and have helped to overcome the deep historical biases that afflicted the profession for many generations.

Sustaining and strengthening the transformation that was beginning to occur because of the different background of historians was the dramatic period of protest and reform that occurred in American society in the 1960s and 1970s. The struggles of women, people of color, and religious minorities to gain equal rights spurred many historians (many of whom were involved in these movements) to ask new questions about the role of race and gender relations in the nation's history and to examine racial minorities, women, and working people as integrally involved in the making of American society. They were not breaking new ground altogether; for many decades, reaching back to the early nineteenth century, pioneering individual scholars had tilled the fields of women's and minority history, and the events of the 1930s spurred interest in labor history. But the professional colleagues of this avant garde offered little appreciation of their work, and certainly their efforts to recover the history of women, people of color, and the working classes rarely found its way into textbooks used at the primary, secondary, or even collegiate level. The importance of the social protest movements of the 1960s and 1970s was to legitimize the work of those who had been regarded as cranky radicals and who, in the immediately preceding years of the McCarthy witch hunts, had often been hounded out of academe.

A third development fueling the change in the writing and teaching of history has been the decolonization of the Third World and the growing interdependence of the nations of the world. The national liberation movements that erupted after World War II were accompanied by the emergence of intellectuals who began to construct the history of what Eric Wolf calls "the people without history". Both in Third World countries and in the West, historians began to insist on the integrity of the cultural practices and the venerable histories of indigenous peoples who had been demeaned by the colonizing mentality that measured all civilizations by the European yardstick. In the United States, such efforts were yoked--often uneasily--to area studies programs established by the Ford Foundation, most notably the African studies centers established at a number of major universities. In the public schools this has increased the awareness of the importance of studying the histories of many cultures and of teaching world history rather than simply the history of western civilization. The internationalization has of economic, political, and cultural affairs has driven home the point to historians and teachers that a Eurocentric history that measures all progress and renders all historical judgements on the basis of the experience of one part of the world will not equip students for satisfactory adult lives in the twenty-first century.

Lastly, and crucially, teachers have seen the composition of their own classrooms change dramatically in the last two decades. The public schools especially have been repopulated with people of different skin shades, different native languages, different accents, and different cultures of origin. More than two thirds of the children in public schools in New York City, Houston, Dallas, Baltimore, San Francisco, Cleveland, and Memphis are not white. In Los Angeles, Chicago, Philadelphia, Detroit, San Antonio, Washington, D. C., El Paso, and New Orleans children of color occupy more than three quarters of all classroom seats in the public schools and in a few of these cities comprise more than 90 percent of all public schoolchildren.

Such a demographic revolution--accounted for by the century-long migration of rural southern African Americans to the cities and by the Immigration acts of 1965 and 1990 which have opened the doors especially to people from Asia and Latin America--reminds us that this nation has always been a rich mosaic of peoples and cultures. It reminds us also that we cannot begin to understand our history without recognizing the crucial role of religious prejudice and racial exploitation in our past as well as the vital roles of people from many different ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds in building American society and making American history. The more usable past that a new generation of historians had been creating since World War II became all the more imperative in the schools as new immigrants and people of color became numerically dominant in most of the large urban public school systems. This will continue. More than 90 percent of all immigrants--legal and undocumented--entering the United States in the 1980s were from Asia and Latin America, and the patterns is holding in the 1990s.

To what extent has the presentation of history changed in the public schools amidst these intertwined movements? In 1979, reviewing

American history textbooks as they had been written for school children from the early twentieth century forward, Frances FitzGerald concluded that "The texts of the sixties contain the most dramatic rewriting of history ever to take place in American schoolbooks."[15] In FitzGerald's view, one of the largest changes was in the textbooks' new presentation of the United States as a multiracial society--a signal revision brought about, in her view, more because of the pressure of school boards in cities with a high percentage of black and Hispanic students--Newark, New Jersey and Detroit particularly--than because of the influence of new historical scholarship on writers of textbooks for the schools. Yet FitzGerald admitted that by the late 1970s, textbooks were far from cleansed of Eurocentric bias and represented a "compromise . . . among the conflicting demands of a variety of pressure groups, inside and outside the school systems"--a compromise "full of inconsistencies," (among which, she noted, was an almost absolute ban on any discussion of economic life, social and economic inequality, and violence and conflict in American life).[16]

Why was it that the flowering of social history in the universities that made such important gains in breaking through Eurocentric conceptualizations of American history and world history made only limited gains for the teaching of a less nationalistic, white-centered, hero-driven, and male-dominated history in the schools? In theory, the schools might have been expected to reflect faithfully the remarkable changes in historical scholarship. This proved not to be the case for several reasons. First, most teachers who ended up teaching social studies had only a smattering of history in their Bachelor of Arts education--a few courses or a minor for the large majority of them. Second, most teachers were trained at schools where the new scholarship was only palely represented because the 1970s were years in which new faculty appointments were few, especially in the state universities where most teachers are trained. Third, the books used in the schools, though often produced by professional historians, only cautiously incorporated the new social history of women, laboring people, and minorities because publishers who catered to a national market were far more timid than university presses about publishing history that radically revised our understanding of the past, especially the American past. Thus, by the early 1980s, the textbooks in United States history for the secondary schools reflected far less of the new scholarship than textbooks written for college survey classes.

If the 1960s and 1970s brought only a partial transformation of the curriculum, the 1980s have been a period in which the reconceptualization of history, as presented in the schools, has made impressive gains, even though it has had to struggle against a resurgent conservatism, inside and outside the historical profession, that opposes even the partial reforms of the last generation. The barrage of responses to the rewriting of history in the last generation confirms J. H. Plumb's remark that the "personal ownership of the past has always been a vital strand in the ideology of all ruling classes."[17]

The conservative opposition, growing out of the white backlash to the liberal programs of the Kennedy-Johnson era, was led from the top but it reverberated deep into the ranks of white blue-collar America. In the early 1970s, Jules Feiffer captured the disgruntlement of the man in the streets in a cartoon about the white hard-hat worker who complained: "When I went to school I learned that George

Washington never told a lie, slaves were happy on the plantation, the men who opened the West were giants, and we won every war because God was on our side. But where my kid goes to school he learns that Washington was a slaveowner, slaves hated slavery, the men who opened the West committed genocide, and the wars we won were victories for U. S. imperialism. No wonder my kid's not an American. They're teaching him some other country's history." Feiffer's cartoon captured the essence of Plumb's observation that history is a powerful weapon traditionally in the arsenal of the upper class: even an elitist, male-dominated, Eurocentric history appealed to the white working class because, while they were largely excluded from it, they were also the beneficiaries of it relative to women and people of color.

In the last decade, some members of the historical profession have taken stands much like Feiffer's blue-collar white parent. Articles began to appear about 1980 complaining about the "crisis in history"--a crisis, it was argued, caused by the rise of the new social history that traced the historical struggles and contributions of the many groups that had attracted little notice from most historians. C. Vann Woodward called for a return to narrative history because, he maintained, historians had lost their way in the welter of narrow quantitative and technical monographs that could not be synthesized into a broad interpretation of American history suitable for schoolchildren. Henry Steele Commager, Page Smith, and Bernard Bailyn similarly advised their colleagues to get back to what historians were once noted for--writing riveting narrative history. "The sheer disarray and confusion in the proliferation of analytical historiography" and the consequent loss of coherence in the master lessons of history was ruining the profession, Bailyn claimed in his American Historical Association address in 1981.[18] Most of these attacks, while genuinely concerned with how the enormous output of specialized scholarship could be digested and synthesized, also appeared to some to be veiled attacks on the writing of the history of race, class, and gender relations in the history of the United States, Europe, and other parts of the world.[19]

Thus, unlike in the period from the 1930s through the 1950s, when opposition to a reconceptualized history was expressed in terms of the unsuitability of the "outsiders" entering the profession, the current debates within the historical profession focus on the kind of history that is being written. The former outsiders are now within the academic gates, and it will not do any longer to attack them as sociologically and temperamentally unsuited for the work they do; rather, it is the history they write that has come under fire.

Opponents see the new history of women, laboring people, religious and racial minorities--sometimes lumped together under the rubric "social history"--as creating a hopelessly chaotic version of the past in which no grand synthesis or overarching themes are possible to discern and all coherence is lost. Of course, the old coherence and the old overarching themes were those derived from studying mostly the experiences of only one group of people in American society or in grounding all the megahistorical constructs in the Western experience. The contribution of the social historians is precisely to show that the overarching themes and the grand syntheses promulgated by past historians will not hold up when we broaden our perspectives and start thinking about the history of all the people who constituted American society, French society, or any other society. If the rise of women's history, African American history, labor history, and other group histories has created a crisis, we must ask "whose crisis"? For example, it is not a crisis for those interested in women's history because students of women's history know they have been vastly enriched by the last generation's scholarship. Moreover, they know that they have not only gained an understanding of the history of women and the family but in the process have obliged all historians to rethink the allegedly coherent paradigms for explaining the past that were derived from studying primarily the male experience.

Nor is the current state of scholarship a crisis for those interested in African American history. With our knowledge so vastly enlarged in this area, we can see how correct Du Bois was in his assessment of a viciously distorted history presented to his generation, and we can go on with the work of reconstructing our history. The crisis, in fact, is the crisis of those whose monopolistic hold on the property of history has been shattered. The democratization of the study of history has undermined the master narratives of those who focused on the history of elites and particularly on grandiose syntheses of "the rise of American democracy" or the majestic "rise of Western civilization"--syntheses that, in spite of claims of objectivity, have been highly subjective and selective in the organizing questions asked, the evidence consulted, and the conclusions drawn.[20]

Joan Wallach Scott has argued that what is most disturbing to those who oppose the transformation of the historical profession in the last generation is that the new social history "has exposed the politics by which one particular viewpoint established its predominance."[21] In this regard, she characterizes the inventors of the political correctness label as those who uphold traditional history because it is the intellectual fortress of "the white male privilege they so deeply desire and want to protect."[22] Perhaps even more threatening, however, is the fact that the new history, in paying close attention to gender, race, and class, demonstrates that historical experiences varied with the position and power of the participants. To admit this is to end forever any single interpretation or completely unified picture of American history (or the history of any society). By showing that different groups experienced a particular era or movement in starkly different ways, such terms as "The Jacksonian Age of the Common Man", the "Westward Movement," the "Progressive Era," or the post-1945 "Affluent Society" become only the tell-tale labels of a narrowly conceived history. There is nothing new in historians arguing over a particular movement or era. They have always argued--for example, about how radical or conservative the American Revolution was, about the profitability of slavery, or about the the character of Progressivism. But these arguments took place within certain conceptually defined spaces where race and gender--and often class--were hardly regarded as usable categories.

Many traditional historians have found it painful to watch time-worn labels and characterizations of staple chapters of history vaporize under the impact of the new social history. To a historical profession dominated by white males, it was fun to argue, for example, about Turner's frontier thesis--whether the frontier truly was a crucible of democratic ideas and institution-creating behavior, a place where democratic values were continuously replenished. But to these historians, it is painfully unsettling--no fun at all--to consider the westward movement from the perspectives of the Sioux or the

Cheyenne who watched the wagon trains appearing from the east; from the vantage point of Mexican ranchers and miners of the Southwest who found themselves demographically overwhelmed by the land-hungry arriving Euroamericans; and through the eyes of Chinese contract laborers brought to the Pacific slope in the 1870s to build levees and railroads. For each of these groups the "frontier movement" was anything but heroic, anything but the westward "march of democracy." The deepest threat of a new history built upon a consideration of alternative experiences and perspectives is that it goes beyond incorporating notable figures who were women or people of color into the traditional storyline and searches for an altogether new storyline based on the historical experiences of the entire society under investigation.

Notwithstanding the sharp attacks on social history in recent years, multiculturalism--defined as the integration of the histories of both genders, people of all classes, and members of all racial, ethnic, and religious groups--has proceeded rapidly in the last few years. Multicultural curricula, "stressing a diversity of cultures, races, languages, and religions," and eliminating "ethnocentric and biased concepts and materials from textbook and classroom," have been adopted by school systems throughout the United States.[23] California has implemented an explicitly multicultural history-social science curriculum, and many other states and individual school districts are following the same path, though with many variations.

AFROCENTRISM AND MULTICULTURALISM

How do these debates among professional historians connect with and affect the current debates over multiculturalism in the schools? And how do they allow us to appraise the rise of the Afrocentric perspective--a powerful movement within the public schools of the nation's largest cities? Perhaps it is not surprizing, given how long it has taken for textbooks and school curricula to change that, while some members of the historical profession were resisting the movement toward a history that pays attention to gender, race, and class, some school reformers, especially those who were not part of the white majority, would find the reforms of the last two decades too slow and too fragmentary. For some educators, particularly a group of African Americans, the reforms were altogether wrongheaded, so that greater speed and thoroughness toward a multicultural approach was not at all desireable.

While textbooks have been changing in the 1980s--and almost without exception in the direction of including more of the struggles and contributions of women and racial minority groups (though they have done much less to increase coverage of the contributions and struggles of labor and religious minorities)--much else has been changing too that accounts for the rise of Afrocentrism. It needs to be remembered that this is a movement that has taken form in the 1980s when the rhetoric and policies of the Reagan and Bush presidencies have given most African Americans and other minority groups plenty to be disillusioned about. To be sure, some gains have been made--and a few held onto. For example, the percentage of black Americans completing high school has risen from 36 percent in 1970 (for whites the figure was 57 percent) to about 67 percent by 1988 (as against 78 percent for whites). Smaller gains have been made in the percentage of black Americans graduating from college--from 6 to 16 percent of all 25-year olds between 1970 and 1988. Also, the black middle class has expanded substantially, from about 6 to 14 percent of all black families between 1967 and 1989 (during the same period, the white middle class also expanded, from about 17 to 31 percent of all families).[24]

But by almost every social statistic available, the lowest stratum of American society, which includes a vast proportion of African Americans, has suffered egregiously during the last decade while wealth was redistributed up the pyramid. In 1989, nearly 44 percent of all black children live below the poverty line (compared with 14 percent of white children). Similar statistics can be marshalled regarding the growing gap between black and white America in unemployment, teenage pregnancy, violent crime, infant mortality, and incarceration. Teased in the 1960s and 1970s by the vision that the end of white supremacist America might bring racial equality, many African Americans in the 1980s and early 1990s feel disillusionment, frustration, and rage. It is this soil that has proved fertile for the seeds of certain extreme forms of Afrocentrism (which at heart are cultural separatist programs) to germinate, especially in the large cities where the conditions are most desparate for young American blacks. Reaganism did not create black cultural nationalism--of which Afrocentrism is one form. It has existed for two centuries. But Reaganism has created the conditions in which black cultural nationalism has grown, just as in the past its predecessor movements grew out of frustrated hopes and shattered dreams.

While facing a situation in the urban centers of American life that has made the young black male "an endangered species" in the phrase of the NAACP, in educational circles African American educators and their white allies have had to confront powerful traditionalists who oppose multiculturalism or grudgingly accept only gestures toward it. Education czars like William Bennett and a growing number of academics, some of them gathered in the newly formed, ultra-conservative National Association of Scholars, which claims 2,500 members, have been virulently hostile to the directions in which historians (as well as scholars and educators in literature, sociology, and other disciplines) have been moving in their interpretations of American and world history and culture. A classic case of this rearguard defense of traditional history is the brouhaha over the movement by the faculty at Stanford University to reformulate its required courses in Western Civilization. Conservatives, led by William Bennett (at the time the Secretary of Education) went out of their way to portray the thoughtful debate at Stanford over broadening the readings included in the required courses, and to change the title of the courses to "Cultures, Ideas, and Values," into an all-out attack on "the great books" of Western Civilization. As described by Dinesh D'Souza, the Stanford faculty, caving in to student radicals, trashed its venerable Western culture requirement and replaced it with a program that emphasized works on race and gender issues by hardly reputable Third World authors, people of color, and women.[25]

D'Sousa grossly distorted what actually occurred at Stanford--both in the nature of the debate and in the outcome, as can be appreciated in the report of one of the Stanford instructors teaching in the "Cultures, Ideas and Values" program.[26] In fact, the Stanford faculty was engaging in what is most valuable about the academic enterprise: thinking critically about received knowledge, challenging inherited assumptions when they seem no longer legitimate, and constructing new curricular models reflected new scholarship. Besides revising the curriculum in an academically responsible way, the Stanford faculty gave students a case study in the kind of critical thinking that is the essence of a liberal education.

D'Souza's misrepresentations are perhaps not surprising since they come from one of the founders of the blatantly racist and antisemitic Dartmouth Review. More dismaying from the perspective of African Americans and their white allies must be the flight of some with whom they stood shoulder to shoulder in earlier days--historians such as Eugene Genovese and C. Vann Woodward to the neoconservative side of current debates on multiculturalism and political correctness. If such attacks on multiculturalism continue to parallel the growing white opposition to group entitlements and affirmative action programs, then Pat Buchanan may have his way. "When we say we will put America first," Buchanan explains, "we mean also that our Judeo-Christian values are going to be preserved, and our Western heritage is going to be handed down to future generations, not dumped onto some landfill called multiculturalism."[27] It is in this discouraging atmosphere of retrogressive governmental policies on issues of race, neoconservative attacks on the opening up of subjects such as history and literature to include the experiences and voices of huge components of the population never thought worthy of more than token inclusion, and a condition of what Jonathan Kozol has called "savage inequalities" in the public schooling of our children that Afrocentrism has made its appearance and become a powerful movement in the public schools of the major cities of the country.[28]

Designed primarily to nurture self-esteem in black children by teaching them of the greatness of ancestral Africa and the contributions that Africans of the diaspora have made in many parts of the world, the Afrocentric approach is mostly the work of non-historians. Its most widely visible and vocal leaders are Molefi Kete Asante, whose degree is in rhetoric and communications; Asa Hilliard, whose degree is in education; and Leonard Jeffries, City College in the City University of New York, whose degree is in political science. Such educators surely cannot be faulted for regarding the dropout rates, low achievement scores, and lives blighted by drugs, violence, and early pregnancies of young African Americans as a national tragedy--and one that white America is largely uninterested in addressing. For these educators, an Afrocentric curriculum that sees all knowledge and values from an African perspective is a cure. "The only issue for us," says Jeffrey Fletcher, who is part of the Black United Front for Education Reform in Oakland, California, "is how we can get out of this plight. It's like if you have someone around your throat choking you. It's nice to know about the baseball scores and other cultures, but the only thing you need to know is how to get those fingers off your neck."[29]

Afrocentrism is both an intellectual construction and a social-psychological remedy, and the two parts of it deserve separate discussion. As an intellectual construction, Molefi Kete Asante explains, Afrocentricity means "literally placing African ideals at the center of any analysis that involves African culture and behavior."[30] If this means homogenizing all of the many distinct African cultures from Mediterranean Africa to steppe and forest dwellers south of the Sahara with their multiplicity of languages, religions, and cultures, and if it means blurring the wide variety of historical experiences over many centuries of culturally distinct peoples, then most scholars would have much to discuss with Asante. But if Afrocentrism means simply that any consideration of African history or the history of Africans of the diaspora must begin with the culture of the homeland and follow the way it was transmitted and maintained, at least partially, outside of Africa, then a great many scholars of the black experience--historians, ethnomusicologists, cultural anthropologists, art historians, linguistic scholars, and so forth--have been Afrocentrists for a long time.

Such a black aesthetic can be traced back at least a century--for example, to the editor of the African Methodist Episcopal Review, H. L. Kealing, who in 1899 wrote that "The greatest bane of slavery to the American negro is that is that it robbed him of his own standard and replaced it with the Grecian."[31] Certainly, in this sense, I was an Afrocentrist (and simultaneously a Eurocentrist and an Indiocentrist twenty years ago when I wrote Red, White, and Black: The Peoples of Early America (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1974; 1981; 1991) because the main thrust of that book was to demonstrate that eastern North America in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was a merging ground for distinct cultures--European, African, and Indian (each culturally various within itself)--and that each culture had to be understood on its own terms if the interaction among them was to be fully comprehended. Perhaps we can agree, then, that the problem with Eurocentrism in our history has never been telling the story through the eyes of the European immigrants; the problem has been leaving other chapters of the story out and universalizing the European values, institutions, and behaviors so that it appears that the European cultural yardstick became everyone's way to measure themselves and their history.

Hence, Afrocentrists, in insisting on appreciating the integrity of African cultures and the persistence of many of their elements during and beyond the diaspora are building on a decades-old movement to overturn the European colonizers' mindset--a movement to which people of many ethnic and racial identities of the last generation have contributed in sometimes separate and sometimes intersecting ways. In this sense, the claim of Asante that "Few whites have ever examined their culture critically" and the parallel assertion that those who have, such as the British historian of Africa, Basil Davidson, have "been severely criticized by their peers," is wholly uninformed.[32] Asante's account of what he believes is stubbornly Eurocentric scholarship on African and African American history ignores the work of two generations of African and African American historians, including those who are English, French, Caribbean, and American and who are of various racial inheritances.

In building on a tradition of ridding ourselves of a Eurocentric approach, Afrocentrism as practiced by some of its proponents, virtually none of whom are historians, has produced some notable contradictions and ironies and a great many oversimplifications. For example, though striving to undermine the significance of Western culture, it's most trumpeted message is that Egypt was black and African (an oversimplification in itself) and that black Egyptians taught the ancient Greeks most of what they knew, which is to presume that what the Greeks knew was highly significant. An irony in Afrocentrism is that its proponents take great pains to find great figures of Western culture, such as Alexander Dumas and Aleksandr Pushkin, who had an African ancestor, and claim them as evidence of the superiority of African culture. Since white America, for more than two centuries, defined anyone with any small portion of African ancestry as black, the Afrocentrists can chortle as they discover that Beethoven's great-grandfather may have been a Moorish soldier in the Spanish army (an assertion, first made by J. A. Rogers, a black journalist a generation ago but still far from proved).[33] But if Beethoven had a black ancestor, the Afrocentrists still have to live with the contradiction of celebrating someone who has been thoroughly a part of western culture while downgrading that culture in the interest of claiming the superiority of African culture as the place where modern science, mathematics, and other disciplines had their origin.

In its treatment of Egypt, Afrocentrists such as Asante are out of touch with most reputable scholarship on the ancient world. Moreover, give precedence to a part of Africa with which most African Americans have little cultural connection. For Asante, the "Afrocentrist analysis reestablishes the centrality of the ancient Kemetic (Egyptian) civilization and the Nile Valley cultural complex as points of reference for an African perspective."[34] It is certainly true that most 19th- and 20th-century scholars in the West have taken Africans out of Egypt and taken Egypt out of Africa, relocating it in the Middle East. But in correcting this, following the work of the Senegalese Africanist Chiekh Anta Diop and more recently by using very selectively Martin Bernal's Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 1987), Afrocentrists who are not historians have tried to turn all of the mixed-race Egyptians into African blacks and to make most of European civilization derivative from black Africa. Moreover, in arguing that the cultures of ancient Egypt and the Nile Valley are the main reference points for an African perspective, such Afrocentrists defy most modern scholarship on the Africans of the diaspora, whose cultures in West Africa were hardly the same as the culture of the Nile. The African-American Baseline Essays produced for the Portland, Oregon schools, is the most comprehensive attempt to set forth an Afrocentric curriculum, clearly follow this misleading path, urging teachers to "identify Egypt and its civilization as a distinct African creation" (that is without Asiatic or European influences). The Social Studies essay devotes more than three times as much space to the history and culture of ancient Egypt as to the history and culture of West Africa in the period before the beginning of the Atlantic slave trade.[35]

Another worrisome aspect of the Afrocentrist argument, also driven home in the African-American Baseline Essays, is the insistence that "African scholars are the final authority on Africa." Ironically, this statement, by the author of the social studies essay, John Henrik Clarke, is made alongside his reliance on a series of studies by white archaelogists going back to the 1920s that demonstrate that the origins of the human species were in East Africa, and in spite of the fact that Black Athena, the work of the white Jewish scholar, Martin Bernal, has attained almost biblical importance among the Afrocentrists. As the history author of a multicultural series of books for children from kindergarten to eighth grade now in use throughout California's public schools, I have been told on many occasions by self-professed Afrocentrists that I cannot write African American history because only someone who is African American can understand it and is entitled to speak or write on the subject. However, none of those who have told me this has been ventured to tell me what they find wrong or insensitive about the last three scholarly books I have published--Forging Freedom: The Formation of Philadelphia's Black Community, 1720-1840 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), Race and Revolution (Madison, Wis.: Madison House, 1990), and (with Jean R. Soderlund) Freedom by Degrees: Emancipation and Its Aftermath in Pennsylvania (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). By such racially polarizing reasoning, we must blot out the work of several generations of white, Hispanic, and Asian historians who have contributed to the rich literature on African history, African American history, and the histories of peoples of the diaspora in other parts of the world.

The non-scholarly form of Afrocentrism, drawing on a long-established movement to stop measuring all things by the European cultural yardstick, has moved perilously close to holding up a new yardstick which measures all things by how nearly they approach an African ideal. When we get beyond labels and cultural yardstick waving, what will be enduringly important for those who wish to study the interaction of African peoples and Europeans, in whatever part of the world, is an ability to look through several sets of lenses. Most of us learned a long time ago that this is what good history and good anthropology are all about. It is hardly arguable that to understand African literature or African American history or Afro-Brazilian music one must have an understanding of African culture as well as the cultures with which Africans were interacting. Nor is it deniable that the stigmatizing of African culture and its derivative cultures of the diaspora has been an essential part of white supremacist thought and that it has been institutionalized in our culture and in the cultures of all societies where Europeans were the cultural arbiters. But Afrocentrism becomes a new and dangerous ethnocentrism of its own when it adopts the colonizers' old trick of arranging cultures on a continuum ranging from inferior to superior. It is this aspect of Afrocentrism that disturbs black scholars such as Henry Louis Gates, Jr., who decries such "ethnic fundamentalism" and attempts "to reduce the astonishing diversity of African cultures to a few simple-minded shibboleths."[36] As long ago as 1945, Emery Reves wrote in The Anatomy of Peace: "Nothing can distort the true picture of conditions and events in this world more than to regard one's own country [or culture] as the center of the universe and to view all things solely in their relationship to this fixed point."[37] We seem destined to relearn this lesson.

When Afrocentrism makes the leap from theory and scholarly perspective to a curricular prescription for the schools, its problems multiply. Asante believes that "most African-American children sit in classrooms yet are outside the information being discussed." If he means this statement to apply to modern mathematics, science, and computer skills, or even to reading and writing skills, and if the remedy is to learn about ancient Egyptian concepts of science and magic, then black children taught in an Afrocentric curriculum will not acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to move forward in modern society. In social studies classrooms, knowledge of African history and of the many rich and complex traditions in the period before contact with Europeans can certainly awaken the interest of African American children (and other children too, one hopes) and can teach all children that African peoples, interacting with other societies, have been an essential part of the history of humankind. But getting beyond romantic notions of African history will require that they learn that ethnic and national identities have been stronger than pan-Africanism on the African continent, both before and after the long era of the slave trade and European colonization.

Equally important, African American children, as much as any other children, need to learn about the history of many cultures and historical experiences. The ultimate goal of a multicultural education is to create mutual respect among students of different religions, races, and ethnic backgrounds by teaching them that rich cultural traditions have existed for centuries in every part of the world. "The natural inclination in people to fear and distrust what they find alien and strange," writes Robert K. Fullenwider, "is tempered by an education that makes students' religions, languages, customs, and values familiar to each other, thereby encouraging in students a sympathetic imagination, a generosity of spirit, and an openness to dialogue."[38]

Perhaps too much emphasis has been been placed, in the Afrocentrist educators' program, on the power of pride in African ancestry. In themselves, ancestral pride and group pride, when kept in bounds, are conducive to a healthy sense of one's potential. For example, there is little doubt, as Roger Wilkins has written, that it was of great importance to the Civil Rights activists to assert "a human validity that did not derive from whites" and to understand that "the black experience on this continent and in Africa was profound, honorable, and a source of pride."[39] But ancestral and group pride cannot solve the deep social and economic problems that confront so many youth who live in black communities today. If the most radical black educators devote their energies to refashioning childrens' self-image through an oversimplified and often invented history, what energy will go toward fighting for structural reforms that provide jobs, equal opportunities, decent housing, and a more stable family life for millions of people trapped in poverty and despair? The black historian John Bracey describes the "glories of Ancient Africa" as a understandable but sadly insufficient response "to the harsh realities of the West Side of Chicago, or BedStuy, or the gang mayhem of Los Angeles."[40]

No one doubts that a crisis has overtaken this generation of young African Americans. But the Afrocentrists' faith in the social and economic healing power of a rewritten history that teaches black pride is a bandaid on a massive wound. Hopefully, it will motivate many young learners, but other remedies related to a secure family life and neighborhood environment are also necessary in the development of able, self-confident young people. Afrocentrist educators build their case on the frail premise that the underachievement of black students is caused by a Eurocentric curriculum that teaches African American children to think poorly of themselves. However, most Asian American students, the recipients of the same presumably Eurocentric curriculum, do not have the same scholastic achievement problems. Hence, solutions to school underachievement require thinking about factors other than a curriculum that promotes racially based self-esteem.

Many successful programs offer other solutions. At the Yale University Child Study Center, "a system of unusually intense school involvement in the lives of students and their parents" has markedly raised the achievement scores of young black children from impoverished backgrounds.[41] At a Catholic elementary school in Chicago that enrolls primarily children from one of the city's notorious public housing projects, children succeed because the principal, a black Catholic priest named George Clements, demands "hard work, sacrifice, dedication." The regimen is utterly strict. "A twelve-month school year. An eight-hour day. You can't leave the campus. Total silence in the lunchroom and throughout the building. Expulsion for graffiti. Very heavy emphasis on moral pride. The parents must come every month and pick up the report card and talk to the teacher, or we kick out the kid. They must come to PTA every month. They must sign every night's homework in every subject." The payoff of such a program, according to Clements, is considerable. "We have achieved honors as an academic institution above the national norms in all disciplines."[42] In Los Angeles, two hard-driving and talented principals have put their best teachers in the early grades, emphsized reading, and set high goals for children. "I'm not running a school for dishwashers," sputters Nancy Ichinaga, the daughter of a Hawaiian cane field worker. In here school, where most students qualify for the subsidized lunch program, third grade reading scores exceed those at three fourths of all elementary schools in the state.[43] Local programs based on other premises, but all involving dedicated teachers, inspiring principals, curricular innovation, involved parents, and well-cared for children, have also worked.

If Afrocentrism can somehow help African Americans overcome the poverty and the social pathology in which so many urban children are caught, it must still come to terms with its extremist wing, which is as opposed to multiculturalism as the neoconservative right. For extreme Afrocentrists such as Jeffries and Wade Nobles, a frequently consulted Afrocentrist in the San Francisco area, the teaching of black pride goes hand in hand with teaching hatred of whites and white institutions. All education for black children, Nobles advises, has to be cleansed of white Western influence. "When we adopt other people's theories, we are like Frankenstein doing other people's wills. It's like someone drinking some good stuff, vomiting it, and then we have to catch the vomit and drink it ourselves."[45] Such racial hostility and cultural separatism seems almost calculated to pour fuel on the fires of the already rampant resurgence of white racism during a decade of white backlash against affirmative action programs. John Henrik Clarke, author of the history section of the Portland baseline essays, rejects all religion and urges black Americans to turn their backs on the very religious institutions that for two centuries have been the centers of political and social struggle for African Americans. "At what point," Clarke asked the second National Conference on the Infusion of African and African-American Content in the High School Curriculum in November 1990, "do we stop this mental prostitution to a religion invented by foreigners? All religion is artificial. All the major religions of the world are male chauvinist murder cults."[46]

Leonard Jeffries, the most polemical of the extreme Afrocentrists, goes even farther. He preaches that the international Atlantic slave trade was a conspiracy of Jews and that Jews, along with the Mafia, have in modern times consciously built "a financial system of destruction of black people" and are engaged in a "systematic, unrelenting" attack on African Americans.[47] Jeffries has much more to say about how the essence of world history can be understood as a racial war of the "Ice People" against the "Sun People", and about the natural intellectual and physical superiority of blacks because of the melanin advantage over whites that they enjoy. Jeffries' pronouncements have no scholarly content and are not regarded seriously in academic circles. However, because curricular change is a highly political matter, they are taken with deadly seriousness by educators who have to worry about building interracial consensus in order to accomplish their goals. Jeffries may intend his inflammatory remarks to undermine cross-race reform coalitions and fan the racial hostility that is much on the increase because what interests him, apparently, is black separatism, not a multiculturalism that nurtures mutual respect among people of different cultural backgrounds. But his rhetoric and curricular prescriptions serve as warnings that even more tempered forms of Afrocentrism, if they focus too much on inculcating racial pride, may unconsciously impart a sense of difference and cultural superiority that disserves the multiculturalists' goal of creating mutual respect and an appreciation of other cultures and historical experiences.[48]

It is hard to see what good can come from the programs of the extreme Afrocentrists. If some black youth emerge from such programs with enhanced self-esteem and if that leads to improved school performance that gets them into college, then they will almost certainly have to confront in college the miseducation they will have received. They would have to ponder, for example, that if all religion is artificial, as John Henrik Clarke would have them believe, then the African religious traditions that the enslaved brought with them to the Americas (which helped them endure the horrors of slavery) were artificial too. They will learn in anthropology and social history courses that cultural yardsticks have always been the weapons of those who wish to proclaim the superiority of one culture over all others rather than inculcate understanding of and respect for other cultures. In short, the curriculum being proposed in some large urban school systems looks like "a shadow dance performed at the edge of the abyss."[49]

Many African American historians ignore or reject the simplistic formulations of the Afrocentrists, but it is not easy to step forward--in a society where white discrimination and racism are still so manifest--to say so. The report of the Committee on Policy for Racial Justice, composed of black scholars and headed by the eminent historian John Hope Franklin, however, calls for a multicultural curriculum that teaches children of the historical experiences, the literature, the music and art, and all the other struggles and accomplishments of all racial and ethnic parts of society. "All children," the report argues, "need to see people like themselves express the timeless concerns of humankind and to be symbolically represented in the classroom as worthy of discourse." But the report made no calls for an Afrocentric curriculum for black children. As one assessment of the multicultural debate has put it, "The growing call to do that stems largely from the same perceived 'crisis' in the education of black youth that the committee found, but it comes from outside the scholarly mainstream."[50]

Equally retrogressive is the extreme Afrocentrists' focus on great African or African American figures. It may bolster the self-esteem of African American students to believe that Alexander Dumas, Cleopatra, and the inventor of an important machine for mass-producing shoes named Jan E. Matzeliger were African (actually they were all of mixed race ancestry). But a return to a hero-driven history of extraordinary people as history makers would be an ironic abandonment of the social history of the last generation that has demonstrated the role of ordinary people in history and showed that no major transformations in any society are accomplished without the participation of masses of people.

Still other explosives infest the minefield of extreme Afrocentrism. If the Afrocentrists are correct that their curriculum will raise self-esteem, and therefore performance levels--a disputed point with little solid evidence--then it is logical to suppose that what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. The logical extension of their reasoning is that a Hispanocentrist approach ought to be instituted for children of Hispanic backgrounds; children of Chinese ancestry in this country ought to receive a Sinocentrist education; a Khmercentrist approach is the best road ahead for the thousands of immigrant children from Cambodia; and so forth. Indeed, logic would require the reinstitution of a Eurocentric approach for low-achieving white children, or a series of nation-specific or European ethnic group-specific approaches to help underachieving children of these backgrounds overcome their disadvantages. But what approach would be employed in thousands of classrooms in large cities across the country where children of a great variety of ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds mingle? Which ethnically specific curriculum should be taught [illegible] the growing number of mixed-race children in a society where miscegenation laws, after a long struggle, no longer exist and the rate of interracial marriage is at an all-time high and is increasing yearly? And how do teachers of ethnic pride prevent that pride from turning into ethnic chauvinism and ethnic chauvinism from turning into ethnic hostility, which is what has happened historically in the case of Anglo-Saxon, German, and many other forms of ethnic pride?

SEPARATE GROUND AND COMMON GROUND

Except among what might be called white and black racial fundamentalists, who so far have had only limited influence on curricular change, there is little argument about the desirability of including people of all classes, colors, and conditions in our accounts of how history unfolds. This is simply sound historical analysis. Nor is there much doubt that children will find history more compelling and relevant when they recognize that people of their religion, color, region, ethnic background, or class played active roles in the making of American society. But while discovering the historical relevance of gender, race, religion, and other categories that help shape their identity, students also need to discover the common humanity of all individuals and the ways in which many of the most important lessons from history can be learned by studying themes and movements that cross racial, ethnic, religious, gender, and class lines. To this end, whatever their origins and characteristics, we should hope that all students will find inspiring figures of different colors, genders, and social positions. Why should the lives of Harriet Tubman and Ida B. Wells be relevant only to African American female students? Likewise, what student can fail to gain wisdom from studying the trial of Anne Hutchinson or the Lincoln-Douglass debates? Who cannot draw inspiration from the courage and accomplishments of Black Hawk, John Brown, Elizabeth Blackwell, A. Philip Randolph, Louis Brandeis, Dolores Huerta, and a thousand more who are different rather than the same as oneself? W. E. B. Du Bois knew that the history he was taught was wildly distorted and used as an instrument of white supremacy. But he also understood that he benefited greatly from reading the great writers of many cultures. "I sit with Shakespeare and he winces not. Across the color line I move arm in arm with Balzac and Dumas, where smiling men and welcoming women glide in gilded halls . . . I summon Aristotle and Aurelius and what soul I will, and they come all graciously with no scorn nor condescension. So, wed with Truth, I live above the veil."[51]

The veil of which Du Bois wrote was the color line, of course, and he is only one of a long line of brilliant black scholars who drew sustenance from all parts of humanity. Ralph Elison, growing up in Macon County, Alabama, remembered that he "read Marx, Freud, T. S. Eliot, Pound, Gertrude Stein, and Hemingway. Books which seldom, if ever, mentioned Negroes were to release me from whatever 'segregated' idea I might have had of my human possibilities."[52] C. L. R. James, the Trinidadian historian and author of Black Jacobins, still after a half-century the most important book on the Haitian Revolution, writes movingly of his education in the classics of English literature in the schools of Trinidad. As an adult, James came to understand "the limitation of spirit, vision, and self-respect which was imposed on us by the fact that our masters, our curriculum, our code of morals, everything began from the basis that Britain was the source of all light and leading, and our business was to admire, wonder, imitate, learn." But James went on to read and learn from French and Russian litarary greats and to find an authentic voice of his own, much emriched by his cosmopolitan education.[53] His accomplishments are a reminder that a curriculum organized around only one vantage point for learning, whether English, European, or African, will limit the vision of students and therefore keep them from being all that they can be.

Thirteen years ago, looking at the way multiculturalism was proceeding in its earlier stage, Frances FitzGerald worried that the rise of the new social history that concerned the forgotten elements of the population would lead to a history that was a bundle of fragmented group histories. This, she said, would teach that "Americans have no common history, no common culture and no common values, and that membership in a racial cultural group constitutes the most fundamental experience of each individual. The message would be that the center cannot, and should not, hold."[54] In some urban schools today, one group boycotts another group's ethnic festivities and racial tensions flare when one holiday is celebrated over another, confirming FitzGerald's fear that ethnic pride might increase ethnic divisiveness.[55]

Today, FitzGerald's question about what holds us together, whether we have a common culture, is all the more relevant. If multiculturalism is to get beyond a promiscuous pluralism that gives everything equal weight and adopts complete moral relativism, it must reach some agreement on what is at the core of American culture. The practical goal of multiculturalism is to foster mutual respect among students by teaching them about the distinct cultures from which those who have come to the United States derive and the distinctive, though entwined, historical experiences of different racial, ethnic, religious, and gender groups in American history. "The natural inclination in people to fear and distrust what they find alien and strange," writes Robert Fullinwider, "is tempered by an education that makes students' religions, languages, customs, and values familiar to each other, thereby encouraging in students a sympathetic imagination, a generosity of spirit, and an openness to dialogue."[56] But nurturing this mutual respect and an appreciation of cultural diversity can only be maintained if parents, teachers, and children reach some basic agreement on some core set of values, ways of airing disputes, conducting dialogue--in short, some agreement on how to operate as members of a civic community, a democratic polity. For a democratic polity to endure, the people of a society made up of many cultures must both "be willing to forbear from forcing onto fellow citizens one proper and approved way of life, . . . must possess a certain amount of respect for one another and a certain amount of understanding of one another's beliefs, . . . and [must] want to participate in a common 'civic culture'".[57]

If the mutual respect that is at the heart of genuine multiculturalism cannot live "in isolation of specific cultural forms and supports," what are these forms and supports?[58] They are, in essence, the central, defining values of the democratic polity. The pluribus in e pluribus unum can be upheld in all manner of cultural, religious, and aesthetic forms--from the clothes an individual or group chooses to wear, to their cuisine, their artistic preferences and styles, the dialect and linguistic constructions of their internal social life, their religious beliefs and practices, and so forth. But pluribus can flourish in these ways only if unum is preserved at the heart of the polity--in a common commitment to core political and moral values. Chief among these values is the notion that under our founding political principles government is derived from the people, that the people have the right to change their government, that church and state ought to be separated, that we live under a government of laws, that certain basic rights as spelled out in the first ten amendments to the Constitution are a precious heritage, and that all citizens--apart from whatever group attachments they claim--have a common entitlement as individuals to liberty, equal opportunity, and impartial treatment under the law.

This, of course, is a system of political ideals, not a description of political or social reality. But the ideals are clearly stated in the founding documents and have been reference points for virtually every social and political struggle carried out by women, religious minorities, labor, and people of color. Our entire history can be read as a long, painful, and often bloody struggle to bring social practice into correspondence with these lofty goals. But it is the political ideals, that still provide the path to unum. In his classic study of race relations, Gunnar Myrdal focused on the central contradiction of a democracy that would not extend equal rights to Jews, black Americans, and other "outsiders" and thereby engaged in a massive hypocrisy. But at the same time, Myrdal recognized that such disadvantaged groups "could not possibly have invented a system of political ideals which better corresponded to their interests."[59] That a struggle has occurred--and is still occurring--is no argument against the ideal of a common core culture. It is only a reminder of an agenda still waiting to be completed, of what the African American historian Vincent Harding has poignantly called "wrestling toward the dawn."[60]

NOTES

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3. Leon Litwack, "Trouble in Mind: The Bicentennial and the Afro-American Experience," *Journal of American History* 74 (1987): 326.

4. Frances FitzGerald, *America Revised: History Schoolbooks in the Twentieth Century* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 1979), p. 83.

5. Oliver Perry Chitwood, *A History of Colonial America* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1931), pp. 351-52.

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7. Hugh Trevor-Roper, *The Rise of Christian Europe* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1965), p. 9.

8. Douglas Edward Leach, *Flintlock and Tomahawk: New England in King Philip's War* (New York: Macmillan, 1958), p. ix.

9. David Saville Muzzey, *A History of Our Country* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1937), p. 36.

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11. John Hope Franklin, "The New Negro History," in Franklin, *Race and History: Selected Essays, 1938-1988* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana

State University Press, 1989), p. 46.

12. Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 173.

13. Ibid., pp. 366, 339.

14. Oscar Handlin, *Truth in History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), passim.

15. FitzGerald, *America Revised*, p. 58.

16. Ibid., p. 109 [check].

17. Quoted in Gary B. Nash, *Race, Class, and Politics: Essays on American Colonial and Revolutionary Society* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Pres, 1986), p. xviii.

18. Bernard Bailyn. "The Challenge of Modern Historiography," *American Historical Review* 87 (1982): 3.

19. Joan Wallach Scott, "The Campaign Agast Political Correctness: What's Really at Stake." *Radical History Review*, #54 (Fall 1992).

20. On these points, see Joan Wallach Scott, "Liberal Historians: a Unitary Vision," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, September 11, 1991, B1-2, and "The Campaign Against Political Correctness: What's Really at Stake," *Radical History Review*, #54 (Fall 1992).

21. Joan Wallach Scott, "History in Crisis? The Others' Side of the Story," *American Historical Review* 94 (1989): 690; equally pertinent is Lawrence W. Levine, "The Unpredictable Past: Reflections on Recent American Historiography," ibid., 671-79.

22. Scott, "The Campaign Against Political Correctness," p. 62.

23. Robert K. Fullinwider, "The Cosmopolitan Community," unpublished mss, pp. 2-3.

24. Sam Fulwood, III, "Blacks Find Bias Amid Affluence," *Los Angeles Times*, November 20, 1991.

25. Dinesh D'Souza, *Illiberal Education: The Politics of Race and Sex on Campus* (New York: The Free Press, 1991),

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27. Buchanan is quoted in *The Nation*, January 6/13, 1992, p. 21.

28. Jonathan Kozol, *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's Schools* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1991).

29. David L. Kirp, "The Battle of the Books," *San Francisco Chronicle*, "Image" section, February 24, 1991.

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31. Quoted in Roger Lane, *William Dorsey's Philadelphia and Ours: On the Past and Future of The Black City in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 278.

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33. J. A. Rogers, *100 Amazing Facts About the Negro: With Complete Proof: A Short Cut to the World History of the Negro* (New York: F. Hubner, nd), pp. 5, 21-22.

34. Asante, *The Afrocentric Idea*, p. 9.

35. John Henrik Clarke, "Social Studies African-American Baseline Essay," pp. SS-12-13 and passim.

36. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "Beware of the New Pharoahs," *Newsweek*, September 23, 1991, p. 47.

37. Emery Reves, *The Anatomy of Peace* (New York: Harper &

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38. Fullinwider, "Multicultural Education," The University of Chicago Legal Forum, Volume 1991: p. 80.

39. Roger Wilkins, A Man's Life: An Autobiography (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), p. 184.

40. John Bracey, in African Commentary, November 1989, p. 12.

41. Reported in Nicholas Lemann, The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How It Changed America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), p. 350.

42. As quoted in ibid., p. 303.

43. Los Angeles Times, Feb. 2, 1992, p. 1.

44. See, for examples, the elementary schools described in David L. Kirp, "Good Schools in Bad Times," Los Angeles Times Magazine, January 5, 1992, pp. 18-19, 35-37. The Children's Storefront, a privately financed school in East Harlem populated with children from the "some of the worst poverty and racial oppression in America," has set many children on the road to achievement. Its founder and headmaster, Ned O'Gorman, stresses high expectations for his children and offers a curriculum that stresses classics as well as other subjects. The school's success is reported in Los Angeles Times, Feb. 2, 1992.

45. Wade Nobles, quoted in Andrew Sullivan, "Racism 101," The New Republic, November 26, 1990, p. 20.

46. Ibid., p. 25.

47. Leonard Jeffries, quoted in Jim Sleeper, "Blacks and Jews," The Nation, September 9, 1991, p. 252.

48. See Fullinwider, "Multicultural Education," p. 88 and Fullinwider, "Cosmopolitan Community," pp. 17-18 on how "a positive sense of self may be the reverse side of a negative view of others" and how

"We prize our group's cultural traits in contrast to the 'unattractive' traits of other groups."

49. Kirp, "The Battle of the Books," p. 25; for the debate in California over the adoption of a new series of textbooks meant to respond to the call for multicultural education, the most balanced accounts are Kirp, "Battle of the Books" and Richard Reinhold, "Class Struggle: California's Textbook Debate," *New York Times Magazine*, September 29, 1991.

50. Robert K. Landers, "Conflict Over Multicultural Education," *Educational Research Reports*, November 30, 1990, p. 691, quoting *Visions of a Better Way: A Black Appraisal of Public Schooling* (1989), pp. 3-4.

51. Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1903), p. 82.

52. Quoted in Jim Sleeper, *The Closest of Strangers: Liberalism and the Politics of Race in New York* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), p. 234.

53. C. L. R. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1963), pp. 38-39, 70, and passim.

54. FitzGerald, *America Revised*, p. 104.

55. "Multiculturalism: Building Bridges or Burning Them?" *Los Angeles Times*, November 30, 1992, p. 1.

56. Fullinwider, "Multicultural Education," p. 80.

57. Ibid., p. 81.

58. Fullinwider, "Cosmopolitan Community," p. 21.

59. Gunnar Myrdal, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1944), p. 13.

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CHAPTER 7

STANDARDS IN AMERICAN EDUCATIONAL HISTORY

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Standards in American Educational History

By Diane Ravitch

Imagine a Rip Van Winkle who went to sleep in the late 1960s and woke up in the early 1990s. Now, there would be many things of a technological and social nature that would shock and amaze him; the omnipresence of computers would doubtless impress him; certainly he would be startled to discover that the Cold War had ended and the Soviet Union had dissolved. But if this Rip Van Winkle happened to be keenly interested in American education, he would probably be astonished to discover the intensity of interest and activity connected to setting standards in education and developing new kinds of examinations. Assuming that he had satisfied his curiosity about the other major events that had transpired, he would surely wonder how the word "standards," which had seemed so discredited and elitist in the late 1960s, had been rehabilitated and why so many different organizations were engaged in setting standards.

If Rip confronted me with his questions, I would give two answers, one covering the recent past, the other ranging across our history as a nation. The first would describe a movement that began with a reformist report called "A Nation at Risk," and that acquired political staying power several years later with the establishment of the national goals. Goals three and four of the national goals adopted by the President and the nation's governors in 1990 pledge that American students will demonstrate mastery of certain subjects, and it would be impossible to strive for these goals without defining what was to be learned and without finding ways to assess whether students were making progress towards the goals. The long-range answer, the context for present activities, is that American education has a long history of standard-setting; the current movement cannot be understood without reference to that history.

As a nation, we are extremely diverse in terms of our population, our origins, our communities, and our regions; because of our diversity, we use education as a means of facilitating communication and a modicum of social cohesion, for example, by promoting a common language and shared civic values. But even more is expected of schooling, which in this society has been described since the days of Horace Mann as the great equalizer of opportunity. To provide equal opportunity, the schools must necessarily offer access to education that is not wildly dissimilar in kind or quality. Over the years, standards of various kinds have evolved--sometimes purposefully, sometimes serendipitously--to foster some degree of similarity in the quality of schooling, such as:

*the use of identical or similar textbooks;

*the specification of requirements for high school graduation or college entrance;

*the use of standardized achievement tests for promotion or college admission;

*the prescription of curriculum patterns;

*the professionalization of teacher training, with shared norms and expectations (i.e., standards).

Although educators and educational critics periodically rebel against the constraints and stifling effects of conformity, uniformity, standardization, and homogenization, a great deal of time and attention have been spent by educators trying to establish shared norms, expectations, and standards for purposes of efficiency or equality or both. In reality the schools have always been bounded by external expectations. This tension between the search for order and the rejection of conformity is healthy, since we value individualism and imagination far too much to submit to mechanistic, behavioristic prescriptions. At the same time, we as a society want to be assured that every student has equal access to a good education; no matter how divergent one's definition of a "good education," that hope or expectation tends to establish parameters for what schools do.

In the earliest days of formal schooling, before the Revolution, "standards" existed by default. In the rude schools of the day, children used The New England Primer as a text and recited before the teacher. After the Revolution, Webster's Blue-backed speller provided something akin to a national standard for many years, as did Lindley Murray's English Reader, an anthology of English literature that was widely used in the schools of the early republic. By all accounts, Webster's spellers were used not only in school but by adults for self-education, setting a national standard for spelling and pronunciation, as Webster had hoped. As early as the 1830s, school reformers complained about the burgeoning of textbooks in every field. But even though there was a multiplicity of titles, the content of the books was more like than unlike. And in some fields, like reading, one or two series dominated the market. For example, even after textbooks and publishers proliferated, the McGuffey's reading books swept the lion's share of the market. Today, it seems clear that the content of children's education was more alike than different; when one looks at the textbooks of the nineteenth century, it is striking how similar are the history books, the readers, and others vying for market share in the same subject area. McGuffey's Readers and its rivals often contained many of the same entries, and the history books told essentially the same patriotic national history. The uniformity found in the reading materials extended to classroom methods, with few exceptions. Throughout the nineteenth century, the daily life of schools was remarkably similar, regardless of the type of community or region.

But, wait a minute, Rip says, "You are describing uniformity, not standards. Get your terms right." He's right. Let me explain my terms. "Content standards" refer to what children are expected to learn; "performance standards" refer to how well they have learned it. You might say, then, that American schools by and large have had content standards, as defined in relatively uniform classroom materials, and they even have had an implicit consensus about performance standards, with a broadly shared scale that ranged from A to F, or from 100 to 60. It was not exact, but educators had a common vocabulary with which to gauge student performance.

Lacking any state or national testing system, the only reliable standard for student performance in early America was provided by college admission requirements. Each college had its own entrance requirements, and each informed prospective students in which subjects they would be examined. This examination was conducted usually by the president of the college and members of the faculty. The first admission requirement to Harvard in 1642 read: "When any Scholar is able to read Tully or such like classical Latin in verse and prose, suo (ut aiunt) Marte, and decline perfectly the paradigms of nouns and verbes in ye Greeke tongue, then may hee bee admitted into ye College, nor shall any claime admission before such qualifications." [1] The author notes, "Suo, vestro, or nostro Marte was a Latin proverb meaning by one's own exertions, i.e., without any assistance whatever. It seldom appears untranslated.") The only significant addition to the college curriculum in colonial times was arithmetic, which appeared for the first time in the entrance requirements for Yale in 1745: "That none may expect to be admited into this College unless upon Examination of the President and Tutors, They shall be found able Extempore to Read, Construe and Parce Tully, Virgil and the Greek Testament; and to write True Latin in Prose and to understand the rules of Prosodia, and common Arithmetic, and Shall bring Sufficient Testimony of his Blameless and Inoffensive Life." [2]

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[1] (Edwin Cornelius Broome, A Historical and Critical Discussion of College Admission Requirements (New York: Columbia University, 1903), p. 18.

As time went by, college entrance requirements became both broader and more specific. That is, they expanded to include more subjects during the course of the nineteenth century, such as algebra, geometry, English grammar, science, modern foreign languages, history, and geography, but they became more specific about the literary works that students should have mastered before their examination. Thus, Columbia College declared in 1785: "No candidate shall be admitted into the College...unless he shall be able to render into English Caesar's Commentaries of the Gallic War; the four Orations of Cicero against Catiline; the four first books of Virgil's AEneid; and the Gospels from the Greek; and to explain the government and connections of the words, and to turn English into grammatical Latin, and shall understand the four first rules of Arithmetic, with the rule of three." [3] While there was some small variation in the Latin works that were required, the three constants in Latin were Cicero, Virgil and Caesar. Students prepared themselves in accordance with these "content standards" and presented themselves for examination at the college of their choice.

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[2] Edwin Cornelius Broome, A Historical and Critical Discussion of College Admission Requirements (Princeton, New Jersey: College Entrance Examination Board, 1903), p. 30.

[3] Broome, p. 34.

In retrospect, the requirements appear fairly uniform, yet there was still enough variation in college entrance requirements to frustrate headmasters of academies and secondary schools. Different colleges expected candidates for admission to know different works of Greek and Latin, and once the colleges had strayed beyond the familiar classical subjects of Greek, Latin, and mathematics, the possibilities were endlessly varied. Consequently, in the late nineteenth century, several associations were established to promote closer relations between schools and colleges, and most especially, to promote uniformity of college admission requirements. The collaboration was good for the schools, because it relieved them of the burden of preparing students for a wide variety of entrance examinations; it was also beneficial for the colleges, because it enabled them to exert influence on the curriculum of the secondary schools.

As the last decade of the nineteen century opened, many educators saw the burgeoning high school curriculum as an anarchic mess, cluttered with new subjects. In an effort to promote uniformity of curricular offerings in the high schools, no agency was more notable or effective than the justly celebrated Committee of Ten. Appointed by the National Educational Association in 1892, the Committee was charged with making recommendations to improve the offerings in the nation's high schools. The chairman of the Committee of Ten was Charles W. Eliot, President of Harvard University, and one of the most esteemed educators of his era. The committee included William T. Harris, the U.S. Commissioner of Education (and former superintendent in St. Louis), four other college presidents, and three high school principals (the tenth member was a college professor).

The Committee of Ten was the first national "blue ribbon panel" to study the curriculum of the high school; in the century that has passed since the creation of the Committee of Ten, many forests have been felled to express the views of untold numbers of committees, commissions, panels, task forces, and study groups that sought to influence the minds of educators, parents, and other citizens. On reflection, the very existence of the Committee of Ten is somewhat remarkable, since there was no precedent for a national body to issue recommendations to the many thousands of school districts nor was there any mechanism to promote or require compliance. The Committee had no way of knowing whether anyone would heed its proposals. Yet its report, perhaps because of the stature of its members and sponsors, as well as the novelty of the undertaking, received widespread attention and achieved some measure of influence upon the curricula of many schools.

The Committee of Ten had to wrestle with four difficult issues: First, how to resolve the antagonism between the classical curriculum and the modern academic subjects like science, history and modern foreign languages; second, how to promote uniformity in preparation of students for college (and, conversely, how to encourage colleges to accept modern subjects as valid for college entrance); third, how to respond to demands by some educators for inclusion of practical courses like manual training; fourth, whether the high schools should offer different curricula for those who were college bound and those who were not.

The report of the Committee of Ten was an effort both to establish new curricular standards for high schools and to alter the admission standards for colleges and universities. And while it is true that other influences were simultaneously at work in schools and society, both complementing and subverting the proposals of the Ten, it seems clear that the report was extremely effective in changing standards at both levels of education in the years after it was issued. The committee engaged nine subject-matter conferences to examine each major subject and to make recommendations on how it should be taught, how teachers should be prepared, when it should be introduced, for how many hours each week and for how many years, and so on. Each subject matter conference considered carefully what the course of study should consist of and how the subject should be assessed for college admission. The subjects were: Latin; Greek; English; other modern languages; mathematics; physical science (physics, astronomy and chemistry); "natural history" (biology, including botany, zoology, and physiology); history, civil government, and political economy; geography (physical geography, geology, and meteorology.

A major recommendation of the Ten was that the modern academic subjects should be equal in status to the classical curriculum for purposes of college entry. The report endorsed four model curricula, which differed mainly in the amount of time given to foreign languages: classical (containing three languages, including Greek and Latin); Latin-scientific (containing two foreign languages, one of them modern); modern languages (containing two modern foreign languages); and English (containing only one foreign language, either ancient or modern). This recommendation implied certain things that seemed radical to some educators: first, that neither Latin nor Greek was absolutely necessary for college preparation; and second, that students should be permitted to choose their course of study, so long as it included English, mathematics, history, science and foreign language.

Significantly, the Committee of Ten lined up unequivocally on the side of educational equality. Demands were already heard in the educational press for different kinds of education for the children of workers and the children of privilege, but the Ten rejected this counsel. Instead, it took a firm stand against differentiation between those who planned to go to college and those who did not. All nine of the subject-matter conferences, and the Committee of Ten itself, agreed "that every subject which is taught at all in a secondary school should be taught in the same way and to the same extent to every pupil so long as he pursues it, no matter what the probable destination of the pupil may be, or at what point his education is to cease." The report concluded that "the secondary schools of the United States, taken as a whole, do not exist for the purpose of preparing boys and girls for colleges." They exist to prepare young people for "the duties of life," for which the best preparation is what we would today call a liberal education.[4]

Subsequent commentators complained that the Ten ignored those who were non-college-bound (the great majority of children at that time), instead of recognizing that the Ten meant that all children--especially those who were not headed for college--should have the benefit of a liberal education. The idea of the Ten was radical then as it is now, for they proposed that all children had the intellectual capacity to benefit from an education that included foreign languages, history, mathematics, science, and English. The Ten saw this not as a college-preparatory curriculum, but as a curriculum that would prepare all children for a rich and full life, no matter what their ultimate vocation.

In his study of the report of the Committee of Ten, Theodore Sizer has documented its effects, both specific and general. Sizer found that a number of its specific recommendations were ignored, but it nonetheless provided a standard that was broadly influential at the local, state, and national levels. Enrollments increased, not only in Latin, but also in the modern subjects, like mathematics, science, and English; vocational subjects, ignored by the report, made little headway. The report encouraged the idea of a "central, common core to be taken by all students." Some of its recommendations were strikingly innovative, such as its advocacy of art and music and its support for active learning and critical thinking. The report also helped to legitimatize the principle of election, since students could choose their course of study. This principle ultimately affected both high school graduation requirements and college entrance requirements, since all subjects in the academic curriculum were of equivalent value. Edward Krug was less certain of the Ten's influence than Sizer, finding that much that changed would have happened anyway; he concluded that the Committee "was almost without influence" in its exhortations for schools to treat all pupils alike regardless of their educational destinations. Whether Sizer or Krug is correct, the actual influence of the Committee of Ten is less important than the fact that it was the first attempt by a national body to establish curriculum standards for American high schools. [5]

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[4] The report of the Committee of Ten is reprinted in Theodore Sizer, Secondary Schools at the Turn of the Century (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), or see National Education Association, Report of the Committee on Secondary School Studies Appointed at the Meeting of the National Educational Association, July 9, 1892; with the Reports of the Conferences Arranged by This Committee, and Held December 28-30, 1892, Bureau of Education, Document 205 (Washington, 1893).

The Committee of Ten's report was a product of a period in which many educators were concerned about the seeming "chaos" in education and the lack of coordination between schools and colleges. In addition to the new associations that brought together representatives of schools and colleges in search of common ground, various subject matter groups met to develop uniform standards; for example, in 1895 a National Joint Conference on Uniform Entrance Requirements in English met in Boston to plan how college-bound students should prepare for college and to decide what they should read; by 1898, this group recommended a four-year program in English, which received the approval of nearly 100 colleges.

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[5] Edward Krug, The Shaping of the American High School, 1880-1920 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), pp. 88-89; Sizer, p. 183-195.

The Committee of Ten report was both a product of its era and also a stimulus to other efforts to rationalize and to seek uniform standards in education. By its renown and apparent success, it established a model--or standard--to which many other educational bodies aspired. In a nation in which there is no ministry of education, in which control is broadly dispersed among thousands of local school committees, dozens of state boards, and hundreds (or thousands) of colleges, those who would establish any kind of coordination or standards must struggle for attention. Neither the Committee of Ten nor any of its successors, being nongovernmental, had the power to impose its proposals other than by suasion.

One immediate offshoot of the report was the creation of the Committee on College-Entrance Requirements, established by the NEA to promote the recommendations of the Committee of Ten. This committee, far less celebrated than the historic Ten, worked at formulating a common framework for college preparation, consonant with the recommendations of the Ten. Among its specific recommendations was the proposal that high schools adopt the use of "constants" or "units" to provide a uniform measure for all courses. The committee recommended a total of ten units: four units (or years) of foreign languages, two units of English, one unit of science, and one unit of history. In a four year program of sixteen units, this left the student free to elect six additional units. The consequence of this suggestion was that the curricular discussion--previously focused by the Ten on parallel, equivalent *courses of study*--shifted to the concept of interchangeable, equivalent *units*. This change not only advanced the notion of a standard unit of study, but eventually served to promote the principle of electives and of equivalency among all kinds of subject-matter. These *units*, initially proposed by the Committee on College-Entrance Requirements, were retitled "Carnegie units," after the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching defined a unit as a course of five periods each week for one academic year. Edward Krug saw these developments as part of a "drive toward standardization" that helped to draw the boundary between schools and colleges, but also introduced new limitations; for example, the student who wanted to go to college would have to accumulate units and graduate from a recognized high school, not simply pass an examination set by the college.[6]

Another product of the movement in the 1890s to establish uniform standards for high school graduation and college entry was the creation of the College Entrance Examination Board. In terms of widespread, lasting effect, the College Board was very likely the most important of the innovations of this period, almost all of which emanated from President Eliot of Harvard and his friend Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University. From the time he became President of Harvard in 1869, Eliot had steadfastly advocated educational reform, especially to gain recognition for modern academic subjects and greater range of student choice in the curriculum of schools and colleges. Eliot 's vision, wrote Krug, was "uniformity of standards and flexibility of programs."[7] For this purpose, the work of the College Board was especially appropriate.

Beginning in 1893, Butler and Eliot regularly proposed the creation of an examination board that would establish uniform standards for college admission. They presented the idea to their faculties and also to associations of college representatives. In 1899, Butler and Eliot together advocated the idea at a meeting of the Association of the Middle States and Maryland, which agreed to sponsor such an undertaking. Although college presidents worried about whether the new board might infringe upon their autonomy and might in some way subject them to public control, Butler and Eliot assured them that the colleges would continue to have the freedom to admit whomever they selected, regardless of their test scores. It was an ingenious solution to a vexing problem, in which the private sector of education took responsibility for creating a standard-setting process, while leaving high schools free to teach whatever they wished and colleges free to admit whomever they wished.

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[6] Krug, pp. 161-162.

[7] Krug, p. 147.

Organized by Butler, the College Entrance Examination Board of the Middle States and Maryland--which consisted of representatives from colleges and secondary schools--held its first meeting in November of 1900; it began with only twelve charter members: Barnard College, Bryn Mawr College, Columbia University, Cornell University, Johns Hopkins University, New York University, Rutgers University, Swarthmore College, Union College, the University of Pennsylvania, Vassar College, and the Woman's College of Baltimore. The first examination was conducted in June 1901 and it offered nine subjects: chemistry, English, French, German, Greek, history, Latin, mathematics, and physics. The examinations were based on standards set by recognized national committees--for example, the American Philological Association in Latin, the Committee of Twelve of the Modern Language Association in French, the Committee of Seven of the American Historical Association in history.

Before the first examination, great care was spent assembling a distinguished roster of examiners in each subject, consisting of leading teachers and professors from secondary schools and colleges. The examiners met to establish "criteria and procedures" and to review the questions, to ensure "that they were of approximately the same difficulty and were genuine tests of proficiency and sound teaching." [8] The examinations were given to 973 candidates during the week of June 17, 1901, at 67 locations in the United States and two in Europe. These students produced 7,889 papers, which were read by 39 professors and teachers assembled at Columbia University. (Nearly 80% of the candidates at the first examination were applying to either Columbia College or Barnard College.) For the second year, new subjects were added: Spanish, botany, geography, and drawing, and the examination was offered at 130 centers to 1,362 candidates.

The College Entrance Examination Board had to grapple with the issue of standards in the different subject areas. Initially, it assumed that it could rely on the various scholarly bodies, like the Modern Language Association, but these proved to be uninterested in secondary school teaching. So the Board created its own "committee of review," with responsibility to establish requirements for the examinations in each subject. This committee developed a procedure of assembling special commissions of school and college teachers to review and revise subject standards.

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[8] Claude M. Fuess, The College Board: Its First Fifty Years (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1967), p. 42.

Even the act of reading and grading the examinations helped to support the implementation of what might be called voluntary national standards in the different subject areas. Each year, large numbers of teachers from schools and colleges across the country would meet in New York to read the examinations. There they would talk, discuss papers, laugh about "boners," and work informally at defining performance standards for their field. In 1990s terms, they "networked" as a community of scholars and teachers. At the same time, they shaped standards and enforced them. The grading of the examinations was a professional development seminar of the highest order.

The Board experimented with different performance standards. At first, 60 was a passing score (on a scale of 100); in time, the passing score was dropped to 50, apparently because grading was so rigorous. In 1906, the Board announced the highest scores in each examination and named the schools whose students had earned these marks. In history and English, the readers declared that there was no such thing as a perfect paper; in 1917, when the first 100 was announced in American history, it caused a sensation. In time, the rankings were abandoned because of concern that the competition among schools was undesirable.

Many secondary schools prepared their students for the college entrance examinations. By reading through old examinations and by perusing the College Board's syllabus of English classics, teachers could be sure that their students were well prepared for the examinations. But these practices led to complaints about cramming and to criticism that the form of the examination tested memory power rather than the students' ability to use what they had learned. Ever responsive to criticism, the Board began to consider changes. In 1915, the Board agreed to develop and offer "comprehensive examinations," in which students would be tested on their ability to apply their learning to problems put before them for the first time. The Board offered both the traditional version and the new comprehensive examinations; the overwhelming majority of students continued to take the former type of examination.

The College Entrance Examination Board provided a standard for college preparation, at least for those students who wanted to apply to the colleges that were members of the Board, which included the prestigious Ivy League institutions. But many educators continued to object to college domination, and in the second decade of the century, the National Education Association sponsored a Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education (CRSE), which established a pattern of standards that sharply diverged from the academic emphasis of the Committee of Ten and the College Board.

Unlike the Committee of Ten, which was chaired by the President of Harvard and included college presidents and secondary school principals, the CRSE was dominated by educationists. Its chair was Clarence D. Kingsley, the state high-school supervisor for Massachusetts, and its members were drawn mainly from the world of professional education and colleges of education. Unlike the conferences of the Committee of Ten, which focused on academic subjects, the CRSE established committees not only for academic subjects but for industrial arts, household arts, vocational guidance, agriculture, and other nonacademic concerns. The report of this Commission, published in 1918, identified "the main objectives of education," as follows: "1. Health. 2. Command of fundamental processes. 3. Worthy home-membership. 4. Vocation. 5. Citizenship. 6. Worthy use of leisure. 7. Ethical character." [9] Every academic subject was required to demonstrate its value in achieving these objectives; the emphasis was on utility and social efficiency. Several academic subjects, especially the classical languages and history, were difficult to justify or rationalize in terms of the seven cardinal principles. Neither history nor geography survived as a subject; both were submerged into the new field of the "social studies." The new "standard" for high schools then, was not to be based on the intellectual development of all youngsters, nor on a commitment to the ideal of liberal learning, but on preparing youngsters for present and future social roles. The goal, the standard, was social efficiency. The report endorsed differentiated curriculums, including agricultural, business, clerical, industrial, fine-arts, and household arts curricula. At the time, this seemed an appropriate approach for schools that were suddenly overwhelmed with large numbers of immigrant children, many of whom spoke little or no English. The report legitimized the practice of tracking children into vocational programs, diverting them from college-preparatory programs that appeared (from the point of view of the Commission and many other educators) to be a waste of time for these children. The CRSE report sounded a clarion call for universal enrollment through the age of 18 and offered a curricular rationale for the many students who were headed for the workplace or motherhood, rather than college.

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[9] Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education* Washington, D.C.: Bureau of Education, Department of the Interior, Bulletin No, 35, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1918.

The report gave strong support to the development of comprehensive high schools. Unfortunately, it also supported the practice of curricular tracking, whereby school officials could "guide" students into appropriate curricular experiences, based on predictions about students' future vocation. Inevitably, these guesses tended to encourage differentiation based on social class, race and ethnicity. Thus, the academic track increasingly became a preserve for the minority who were college-bound--the bright, the ambitious, the children of the educated--while the other tracks were occupied by the majority of students who were directed into programs that would prepare them for their future vocational roles.

The report of CRSE was, of course, a reflection of widely shared views in the education profession and in society. The term "academic" was increasingly used in a derisory fashion to refer to studies that had no practical value. Many educators, for many different reasons, converged on certain themes that appeared in the report: that an academic or liberal education was not appropriate for everyone; that the purposes of education should be derived from the activities of life, rather than from book-learning; that book-learning was sterile, "academic"; that children had different needs and should therefore have an education that was fitted to their needs; that the role of the school should change to fit the "needs" of society (and the needs of society were usually in the eye of the beholder). The overriding philosophy was social efficiency, and it supported curricular tracking and a devaluation of liberal education.

Whereas the Committee of Ten had imagined that the academic curriculum should be opened to all children, the CRSE projected a different concept: that the school should be a meeting ground for children enrolled in many different types of curricula. The Cardinal Principles report encouraged large-scale curricular differentiation among children and redefined equal opportunity. Subjects that had no utilitarian value--like ancient history and Latin--began to disappear from the high school curriculum. Many children were guided away from the academic curriculum, which remained the route to college and prestigious careers.

The two reports, separated by twenty-five years, both claimed to be based on the principles of a democratic society. The Ten believed that all children should have the experience of a common academic curriculum, that all should be educated in the same way regardless of who their parents were or what their intended destination in life; the authors of the Cardinal Principles, riding the wave of progressive educational theory, believed that the curriculum should be tailored and differentiated to meet the needs of society and of children. Beginning with similar premises, the two ended up in very different places. The compromise that was struck over time between the conflicting ideals was that the principles of the Committee of Ten applied to the academic track, and the principles of the CRSE governed the vocational and general track. Or, put another way, the CRSE won. The CRSE ideas won out not because they were argued more persuasively but because they provided a good fit for the thorny problems that faced the schools: the problems of mass education and the problems of educating large numbers of children from poor and non-English-speaking backgrounds. Parents of these children did not demand that they be excused from the academic curriculum; what evidence exists, as in the negative reaction of immigrant parents to the introduction of the Gary Plan in New York City, suggests that immigrant parents did not want their children to have a curriculum different from what was studied in the best schools. It would have been possible to educate poor and immigrant children in the way prescribed by the Ten, but to do so would have required enormous intellectual energy in the reformulation of subject matter. It was easier to teach academic subjects to academically able children than to rethink and redesign what was taught in school so that all children could learn and understand the material in the "college track." To do so would have been very difficult and very "inefficient" in an age when efficiency was highly valued; to make such an effort would have been contrary to the dominant ideologies of the era, which paid lip service to meeting the differing needs of children and used intelligence testing in part to identify those "needs." The path of least resistance was chosen, and in time, educators and parents came to believe that certain studies--like advanced courses in mathematics and science and history--were only for the college-bound students, a distinct minority.

At the same time that the CRSE provided the rationale for differentiation of curriculum, the availability of the new techniques of standardized testing facilitated differentiation. After the debut of intelligence tests in World War I, the testing industry mushroomed, providing a broad array of tests of ability, tests of intelligence, and tests of educational achievement.

The question of standards, as applied to the academic curriculum, was defined during most of the twentieth century by college admission requirements. These consisted of the colleges' entrance requirements--a specification of so many years or units of certain academic subjects--and the college entrance examinations. Until the development of the American College Testing program in 1959, the only national examination for the college-bound was that of the College Entrance

Examination Board. The College Board, while vigilant in protecting the quality of the examinations, was sensitive to the constant criticism that the examinations exerted too much influence on the high school curriculum. In the years immediately after World War I, the Board took interest in the new movement for intelligence testing. Unlike the traditional college entrance examinations, which tested what students knew, the intelligence tests claimed to test students' innate intelligence or what students were capable of doing. In 1922, the Board passed a resolution expressing "favorable interest" on the use of a "general intelligence examination" and its readiness to administer such examinations when it became practicable. [10] Since none of the members of the Board was an expert on psychological testing, they appointed an advisory commission of experts, including Carl C. Brigham of Princeton, Henry T. Moore of Dartmouth, and Robert M. Yerkes of Yale. Brigham and Yerkes were, of course, pioneers in the development of intelligence testing. Brigham soon emerged as the driving force in a successful effort to reorient the college entrance examinations and to turn them into tests of intelligence or aptitude.

From the very beginning of the College Board, its founders were uncertain whether the examinations were a test of what the students had learned or a test of their ability to do college-level work. The President of Yale said, in 1900, that the examinations should be "tests of the power to take up the work which is to follow rather than tests of past accomplishment merely." [11] Butler, too, spoke of the virtues of cooperation between teachers and professors, "in arranging and enforcing a test the sole purpose of which is to determine whether the pupil is ready to go forward with advantage from one teacher or institution to the other." [12] Brigham and his team of psychological experts built upon this somewhat inchoate interest in determining a student's readiness for future work and used it as the foundation to propose a new test altogether: the Scholastic Aptitude Test. There were skeptics on the College Board and among the secondary school representatives, but the experts had a mantle of authority--the authority of science--that swept along the doubters.

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[10] Fuess, p. 104.

The first Scholastic Aptitude Test was given in 1926 to 8,040 candidates, most of whom were applying to Ivy League colleges. The father of the SAT, Carl Brigham, became a salaried member of the College Board staff in 1930, and the Board supported his continuing experiments with refining and improving the SAT. Brigham became a major figure at the College Board during the 1930s, and the Board frequently turned to him for advice and policy guidance. Although the SAT did not take the place of the traditional written entrance examination until the Second World War, the College Board recognized its value immediately. The appeal of the SAT grew apace with faith in social science. The standardized, multiple choice test saved the College Board from the wrath of those who complained that the college entrance examinations had too much influence over the curriculum of the secondary schools. It was the perfect answer to the angry headmaster who supposedly muttered in 1902, "I'll be damned if any Board down in New York City, with a college professor at its head, is going to tell me and my faculty what or how to teach!" [13] The SAT freed the secondary schools from the seeming problem of dictation by the colleges. It tested linguistic and mathematical power and had no connection to any particular curriculum. This left secondary schools free to require or not require whatever they chose. The literature curriculum, which had been anchored by the college entrance examinations for so many years, was completely abandoned by the SAT, allowing secondary schools to teach whatever books they wished and, if they wished, to drop the traditional classics altogether.

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[11] Fuess, p. 43.

[12] Fuess, p. 44.

The 1930s was a time in which credibility shifted from the old-style written tests to the new-style SAT. Although some of those on the College Board must have been uneasy about the shift to intelligence/aptitude testing in place of achievement testing, Brigham became "the policy maker" of the Board, "and whatever route was taken for the next few years was charted by him."[14] Each year a few thousand students took the SAT, and colleges began to recognize its practical value for predicting students' ability to do college-level work. And each year the number who took the SAT increased. Then, on Pearl Harbor Day, 1941, at a meeting of representatives of Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, a decision was made to cancel the June essay examinations because of the war. Normally there would have been an outcry from "conservative" educators, who continued to believe that an essay examination was preferable to a multiple-choice test of "aptitude." But the war emergency hastened what at the time seemed inevitable. With this decision, the SAT became the college entrance examination for the nation's most prestigious colleges and universities. The advent of the machine-scored examination meant, first, that the standard-setting force of the traditional (i.e., written) college entrance examination was negated, and second, that the standard-implementing activities of the annual meeting of those teachers and scholars who met to read the examinations were ended.

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[13] Fuess, p. 57.

During most of the 1940s and 1950s, the College Board claimed that its purpose was not to influence standards but to help colleges identify students who were ready for college studies. However, other examinations offered by the College Board defined and supported educational standards, such as advanced placement examinations and achievement tests. Over time, it became clear that the "AP" exams and the achievement tests bolstered high school academic standards at the same time that the SAT undermined them. With its focus on mathematics and verbal skills, the SAT was virtually curriculum-free. Students could improve their performance on the SAT by attending special coaching sessions or by learning test-taking skills. The dominance of the SAT coincided with the dilution of the academic curriculum in the high schools, a trend which may have been facilitated by the content-free nature of the SAT. [15]

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[14] Fuess, p. 113.

College-entrance examinations and requirements were one source of educational standards; another was mandated testing, which was introduced on a broad scale in the early twentieth century. In the 1890s, educational reformer Joseph Mayer Rice introduced what may have been the first test to be administered to a large national sample (in spelling). Edward Thorndike of Columbia University was responsible for the introduction of many standardized achievement tests. Thorndike's colleagues at Teachers College helped to spread standardized achievement testing as part of the school survey movement, which assessed the quality of numerous school districts around the nation and reached its peak in the second decade of the twentieth century. Although there were many reports of teachers and administrators who had their doubts about the value of standardized tests, many schools were administering standardized achievement tests in spelling, arithmetic, reading, and other subjects before the first world war. The use of widescale intelligence testing during the war, coupled with the general admiration of science and social science, helped to popularize standardized testing in the 1920s. During that decade, hundreds of intelligence tests and achievement tests were produced for use in the schools. Both kinds of tests were used to sort children according to their ability and to place them into appropriate programs. [16]

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[15] Clifford Adelman, "Devaluation, Diffusion and the College Connection: A Study of High School Transcripts, 1964-1981" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 1982).

There has been intense criticism of both kinds of tests for many years. Even in the 1920s, Walter Lippman and William C. Bagley criticized the determinism and arrogance of the intelligence testers; since the 1960s, the volume of criticism of all kinds of standardized testing has escalated rapidly. Two points should be made about the general use of standardized testing of both intelligence and achievement. First, both were used to allocate students to different kinds of educational opportunities, in keeping with the curricular differentiation advocated by the CRSE. Second, the widespread adoption of standardized achievement tests relieved states and districts of the necessity of consciously setting their own academic standards. The critical point is that educators relegated the all-important task of deciding what children should know and be able to do to the commercial testmakers.

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[16] Paul Davis Chapman, "Schools as Sorters: Lewis M. Terman and the Intelligence Testing Movement, 1890-1930," Ph.D. Dissertation, Stanford University, 1979, pp. 165-180.

A similar story can be told about the role of textbooks as a standardizing element in American education, although researchers have devoted far less attention to the influence of textbooks than to that of standardized tests. Based on their extensive review of literature about textbook usage, Woodward, Elliott, and Nagel estimate "that from 75% to 90% of classroom instructional time is structured by textbook programs."[17] Produced for mass market sales in a highly competitive marketplace, textbooks are written to satisfy the largest buyers, especially the textbook-adoption committees in large states like Texas and California. Because the textbooks have such an important role in determining what content is taught, and because they are so widely used as a basic instructional tool, they in effect determine what children should know. How do textbook writers decide what children should know? Hopefully, the writers include some scholars and teachers; the writers review the contents of the leading textbooks in the field and the requirements of the textbook-adoption committees in a score or so of states. Through this serendipitous process, the writers arrive at "content standards" that provide the framework for their product.

At this point in our story, Rip Van Winkle may wish that he could go back to sleep for another twenty years, but the tale of standards gets more complicated in the 1960s and 1970s. With the passage of the

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[17] Arthur Woodward, David L. Elliott, and Kathleen Carter Nagel, Textbooks in School and Society (New York: Garland Publishing Company, 1988), p. 7.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act, standardized achievement testing became securely entrenched, because the law required regular testing in schools that receive federal funding through Title I or Chapter I. So the tests, always important, gained an institutional foothold and became a mandated element in the program in a large proportion of public schools. New programs of statewide testing were introduced in the 1970s to meet the requirements of the minimum competency movement, which demanded proof that students had achieved basic skills before graduating or being promoted. During the same era, the textbooks became more uniform than ever, as big companies gobbled up little companies and as a small number of textbooks in each field captured a large percentage of the market. By 1987-88, 45 states and the District of Columbia were using some kind of statewide test; 25 of those entities were employing a commercially developed, nationally-normed test like the California Achievement Test, the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills, the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, or the Metropolitan Achievement Tests.[18]

The proliferation of mass-market textbooks and standardized tests has been criticized by many educators on a wide variety of grounds, but both texts and tests continue to be widely used and enormously influential on what is taught in the classroom. The relevant point, for this narrative, is that both texts and tests are prepared on the basis of assumptions about what is worth knowing. Sometimes these assumptions are explicitly and thoughtfully arrived at, and sometimes they are derived from market research (what sells) without a lot of time devoted to debating or studying what knowledge is of most worth.

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[18] Daniel Marks, "Statewide Achievement Testing: A Brief History," Educational Research Quarterly, Vol. 13, No. 3, 1989, pp. 40-41.

So, here we are, Rip. We do have standards in American education, and the ones that are most widely shared are those that have been embedded somehow in the commercial textbooks and tests, as well as in the college entrance examinations (the SAT and the ACT). Actually, we have multiple standards, depending on which curriculum "track" students are enrolled in and whether they plan to go to college and whether they have applied to a selective college or university. Some students are educated to very high standards, if they expect to take advanced placement examinations and if they intend to apply to one of a relatively small number of selective colleges. Students who are not planning to go to college will likely be exposed to standards that are based on the idea of minimum competency, which they may demonstrate by checking off the correct box on a test of basic skills and by tests of simple recall. Students who intend to go to an unselective college or university, one that takes almost all applicants, will encounter standards that are not demanding; the students know, and their teachers know, that they will be accepted into the college of their choice regardless of how much or how little they work in school, regardless of how much or how little they have learned in school.

At this juncture in the story, A Nation at Risk, the report of the National Commission on Excellence in Education appears. That report warned of "a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people." It described numerous indicators of low educational achievement and criticized specific failings in the school, especially "a cafeteria-style curriculum," low expectations, low standards, and a widespread lack of seriousness of educational purpose.[19] Its publication in 1983 was followed by a frenzy of public concern about the quality of education. Many states established task forces, commissions, study groups, and the like. Many raised their graduation requirements, to demonstrate that students were expected to study more academic courses. Although it became fashionable to say that the reforms of this period achieved little, this is not accurate. For one thing, a new breed of reformer emerged, as well as a new understanding of what was needed to improve student achievement.

California, as one example, elected a new state superintendent, Bill Honig, who promised to raise standards and improve the quality of public education. While tirelessly advocating increased funding for public schools, Honig started a process of reviewing and reconstructing the curriculum in each subject field. He recognized that the starting point for reform is agreement on what to teach; and he brought together panels of teachers and scholars to rewrite the state's curriculum frameworks, which serve as guidelines for textbook publishers. Since California has 11% of the nation's schoolchildren, and since the state adopts textbooks, the frameworks offered the state a way to influence the state (and national) textbook market. Honig also revised state testing, encouraging the development of assessments that were based on the state's curriculum rather than on national norms. In effect, Honig shaped a coherent program of systemic reform by setting new curriculum standards, procuring a new generation of textbooks and technology, and developing new tests.

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[19] National Commission on Excellence in Education, A Nation at Risk (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983), pp. 5, 8-9, 18.

The region that responded most energetically to the prescription of A Nation at Risk was the South. There, a number of governors, notably Lamar Alexander in Tennessee, Richard Riley of South Carolina, and Bill Clinton of Arkansas, took the lead in shaping reform programs that emphasized the establishment of educational standards and assessments. The organizing principle of this new state-based movement was that the focus of reform should be on results, rather than on process, and that states should press for higher educational achievement while reducing regulations and other procedural burdens on schools. Therefore, the governors most actively involved in state-level reforms moved to identify standards, by which they meant what students should know and be able to do, and to develop assessments to provide information about whether students were making progress towards the standards.

Meanwhile, there was increasing demand for information about student achievement by policymakers. In 1986, eight southern states (Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia) administered the tests of the National Assessment of Educational Progress to a representative sample of students. They did so to obtain "the most current and reliable measure of how their students' achievement in reading and/or writing compares to truly national and regional results." They also wanted to establish benchmarks "to gauge their students' relative achievement levels..." Winfred L. Godwin, the president of the Southern Education Regional Board, explained the Southern states' interest in assessment: "The obvious question is--How will we know that we are making progress? Many measures of progress will be important, but none will surpass student achievement." [20]

In 1987, a study group led by Lamar Alexander (then Governor of Tennessee, later U.S. Secretary of Education) and H. Thomas James proposed an expansion of the National Assessment of Educational Progress to include state-by-state comparisons (Hillary Rodham Clinton was a member of the study group). Explicit in this recommendation was recognition that "state and local school administrators are encountering a rising public demand for thorough information on the quality of their schools, allowing comparison with data from other states and districts..." [21] Implicit in this recommendation was the suggestion that school districts ought to be allowed to participate directly in the National Assessment in order to learn how their students were doing compared to other districts. Congress authorized trial state assessments for 1990, 1992, and 1994 but showed little interest in expanding the assessment to the district level. Even the state-by-state assessment was controversial, since many educators saw no value in the comparisons and recoiled against the drift toward a national test.

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[20] Southern Regional Education Board, Measuring Student Achievement: Comparable Test Results for Participating SREB States, the Region, and the Nation (Atlanta: Southern Regional Education Board, 1986), p. iii, 2.

The state-level activity by policymakers and elected officials reflected a somewhat commonsense understanding that the effort to improve education must begin with an agreement about what children are expected to learn, that is, content standards. Traditionally, this agreement had been expressed in Carnegie units, defined by states as years of science or mathematics or English needed to graduate. But Honig in California and the Southern education reformers moved beyond Carnegie units to seek greater specificity, to identify what children were expected to know and be able to do. And wherever there was standard-setting there was also new interest in finding some reliable means of measuring student progress towards meeting the content standards, thus increasing the search for a test or an assessment that would permit comparisons across states, districts, even schools.

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[21] The Nation's Report Card: Improving the Assessment of Student Achievement, Report of the Study Group, Lamar Alexander, Chairman, H. Thomas James, Vice-Chairman, with a Review of the Report by a Committee of the National Academy of Education (National Academy of Education, 1987), p. 11.

As many states wrestled with the difficult process of defining their standards, the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics embarked on a course that would alter the national debate about standards. In response to the criticisms expressed in A Nation at Risk and in another national report about the sorry state of mathematics and science education, the NCTM decided to develop a new K-12 mathematics curriculum.[22] In 1986, the NCTM created a Commission on Standards for School Mathematics, which led a broad consensus process involving large numbers of teachers, supervisors, mathematics educators and mathematicians. Writing teams met during the summer of 1987; they reviewed state curriculum frameworks and the curriculum standards of other nations. Ten thousand copies of the draft document prepared that summer were circulated and reviewed. The writing teams revised the draft standards in 1988, and the NCTM standards were published in 1989. The chair of the NCTM Commission on Standards, Thomas Romberg of the University of Wisconsin, wrote that the writing teams were given the following charge:

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[22] National Science Board Commission on Precollege Education in Mathematics, Science and Technology, Educating Americans for the Twenty-First Century (Washington, D.C.: 1983); Thomas A. Romberg, "The NCTM Standards as a Model for Discipline-Based School Reform," Telecommunications as a Tool for Educational Reform: Implementing the NCTM Mathematics Standards (Wye Center, Md: Aspen Institute, 1992), p. 13.

> 1. To create a coherent vision regarding:
>   a. what it means to do mathematics;
>   b. what students need to do in learning mathematics;
>   c. what teachers should do in teaching mathematics;
>   d. what the emphasis of the curriculum should be;
>   e. what it means to be mathematically literate in a world that relies on calculators and computers to carry out mathematical procedures, and, in a world where mathematics is rapidly growing and being extensively applied in many fields.
>
> 2. To create a series of standards for the curriculum and for evaluation that articulates this vision.[23]

The NCTM gave three reasons for developing standards: first, to ensure quality (i.e., to "ensure that the public is protected from shoddy products"); second, to express expectations (just as, for example, the American Psychological Association sets standards for tests in order to establish their reliability and validity); and third, to establish "criteria for excellence." This last reason meant that NCTM wanted to replace low minimum standards with a goal that would become a stimulus for change; as Romberg explained it, the standards would be "the 'flag' around which teachers can rally for support" and would serve as "an informed vision of what should be done, given current knowledge and experience." [24]

The central concept of the NCTM standards is that "knowing" mathematics is "doing" mathematics. The emphasis throughout is on active learning, problem-solving, reasoning about mathematics, and communicating mathematically. The standards are intended not for the college-bound, but for all students. Their goal is to transform mathematics education so that all students are able to develop mathematical power and to apply mathematical thinking. The standards are intended to replace rote memorization and drill with thinking, estimating, questioning, and figuring things out, and they provide teachers with numerous examples of suggested classroom strategies rather than with a detailed list of requirements.

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[23] Romberg, op. cit., p. 13; National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, Curriculum and Evaluation Standards for School Mathematics (Reston, Va.: NCTM, 1989), p. v.

[24] NCTM, p. 2; Romberg, p. 16.

The NCTM standards had their detractors, to be sure; there continued to be educators who preferred drill and practice and believed that the NCTM standards veered too sharply away from computation. But the NCTM standards nonetheless had a dramatic impact on the field of mathematics. First of all, they emerged from a successful consensus process: They represented the work of the nation's leading mathematics educators. Secondly, as standards, they were dynamic in their reach: The full implementation of the standards required the revision of instruction, teacher education, professional development, textbooks, technology, and assessment. Within two to three years after the NCTM standards were released, significant changes could be seen in every one of these areas, as textbook publishers, schools of education, technology developers, and test-makers all claimed that they were working to conform to the NCTM standards.

At the same time that the NCTM was drafting and revising and publishing its standards, education moved to the front burner as a national issue. In the fall of 1989, soon after the presidential election, President George Bush invited the nation's governors to a summit in Charlottesville, Virginia. At that meeting, the President and the governors agreed that the nation should have national goals for education in the year 2000. These goals were forged through intensive negotiations between the White House and the National Governors' Association. They are:

> In the year 2000,
>
> 1. All children in America will start school ready to learn.
> 2. The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 per cent.
> 3. American students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy.
> 4. U.S. students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.
> 5. Every adult American will be literate and possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
> 6. Every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a safe, disciplined environment conducive to learning. [25]

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[25] National Education Goals Panel, National Education Goals Report (Washington, D.C.: National Education Goals Panel, 1991), p. ix.

To monitor the nation's progress in moving towards the goals, the National Educational Goals Panel was established, consisting of governors and representatives of the White House and the Department of Education. (The initial exclusion of members of Congress from the Goals Panel alienated the legislative branch and made many members unwilling to support the work of the panel). Goal three and goal four clearly had implications for the promotion of standards. In order for American students to demonstrate "competency in challenging subject matter," it would be necessary to define what kind of subject matter was "challenging," and what constitutes "competency."

To advance the new agenda based on the national education goals, President Bush appointed Lamar Alexander to be his Secretary of Education in the spring of 1991. Alexander had been deeply involved in education reform as governor of Tennessee and was committed to the development of national standards. At his behest, the U.S. Department of Education made grants to independent scholarly and professional organizations to develop content standards in science, history, the arts, civics, geography, English, and foreign languages. (The arts, civics, and foreign languages were not explicitly mentioned in the goals, but the Secretary used his discretion to decide that goal three was intended to focus on core academic subjects, which included the arts, civics, and foreign languages.)[26] The NCTM standards served as an explicit model for the importance of a broad and inclusive consensus process and for the power of standards to promote reform in textbooks, tests, instruction, and teacher education. In addition, the Department supported grant competitions to enable states to create new curriculum frameworks in the same subjects in which national standards were being developed, in effect, inviting a synergy between national and state standard-setting.

And so, as I write, some $10 million of federal funds have been committed to the development of national content standards in key subject areas. With additional federal funds committed to state curriculum development not only by the U.S. Department of Education, but also--in mathematics and science--by the National Science Foundation, both money and political momentum supported widespread activity to define the standards at which teachers and children were to aim. The Clinton administration signalled its support for the standards-based reform agenda by framing legislation to encourage the development of content standards, performance standards, and "opportunity-to-learn" standards (i.e. measures of resources, facilities, and the conditions of teaching and learning). Much remains to be decided: what kind of agency, if any, will oversee the development of content standards? How will these standards be revised? Will there be assessments based on the standards?

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[26] I served in the U.S. Department of Education during this period, as Assistant Secretary responsible for the Office of Education Research and Improvement and oversaw the award of grants for developing voluntary national standards.

Who will prepare them? Will there be any consequences (for students) attached to the results of such assessments? Can the standards be kept free of political influence? Will the standards represent "criteria for excellence," or will they be diluted to a low minimum of competence?

My own view--and with this I will return Rip Van Winkle to the dusty stable of rhetorical devices from which he reluctantly emerged--is that the purposeful effort to construct national standards is a promising undertaking that offers the hope of promoting change in many parts of the educational system. It will be a magnet for critics, occasionally from those who fear the heavy hand of government intrusion, but more predictably and frequently from educationists who distrust any emphasis on disciplinary knowledge and who find it hard to believe that children from disadvantaged backgrounds can respond to intelletual challenge.

The promise is that we as a nation can develop a clear and fruitful consensus about what we want children to know and be able to do; that this consensus will prove helpful to students and teachers, and will provide the grounds for improving teacher education, assessment, textbooks, staff development, and classroom technology. The implications for assessment are obvious: Tests should be based on what students have learned. The syllabus for examinations should be made public, so that teachers and pupils know what is expected and can study what is important. It is appropriate to "teach to the test" if the test is valid, reliable, and geared to knowledge and skills that are important. The use of curriculum-free tests for important decisions--e.g., college admission and employment--serves only to certify the unimportance of what youngsters study in school and of the effort that they apply to their studies. With national standards, it becomes possible to base educational tests on what children learn, instead of keeping separate what is learned and what is tested.

It seems to me eminently useful to describe in plain language and with forceful example what we want children to learn and to construct educational reforms around that agreement. The idea of content standards has powerful implications for instruction and assessment. It does not mean that education will be "standardized," but that the expectations that we have for children will be both higher and more transparent. The act of explaining what is needed for success is an essential component of equity; other nations establish national standards in order to provide both equal opportunity and higher achievement. In the absence of clear expectations for all children, curricular differentiation favors the advantaged.

We learn from history that American education does have standards, and that these standards have emerged in a patchwork, higgledy-piggledy, uncoordinated manner. For much of our history, our curriculum standards have been created--almost accidentally--by those who produce commercially-produced textbooks and tests. What children should know and be able to do has been decided offhandedly through a sort of consensus process that occurred at the intersection between state departments of education and publishers hoping to market their products. At the high end, performance standards were established by college-admission tests and advanced placement tests; but for most students, the minimal expectations embedded in nationally-normed tests became de facto national standards.

The challenge before us as a nation is to develop a thoughtful process to decide what knowledge is of most worth, and what knowledge is most valuable to children who will live and work in the twenty-first century. History tells us that it will not be easy to do this; in fact, we know already that the fractious politics of curriculum-making guarantees controversy at almost every step of the journey. Partisans with a mission will seek centralized control, if they think they can get it, to carry their message into every schoolroom; others, fearful of centralization and loss of autonomy, will resist any coordinated effort to develop content standards. But again, the message of history is that autonomy is an illusion; standards are already in place, an accidental product of decisions made for various reasons (was the state-adopted textbook selected because of its educative power or because it had a strong binding, good paper stock, plentiful graphics, and "mentioned" the right list of topics and names?). Could we do better as a society if consciously and thoughtfully decided what we want children to learn, and if we purposefully redesigned the customary means of assessing whether and how well students have learned what was taught? Would more children achieve at higher levels if we were explicit about what was needed for success in school? Could we serve the ends of both excellence and equity by making expectations clearer to everyone involved in the educational process? Could the existence of national standards become a lever with which to reform assessment, teacher education, professional development, textbooks, and instruction?

The risk--and it is real--is that the effort will prove impossible because it is too complex, too controversial, too easily misinterpreted, and too radical a change. The critics are many; for most of this century, many American educators have been suspicious, often even hostile, to reforms grounded in subject-matter, in decisions about what children should learn.

My training as an historian warns me not to expect too much; cautions me that educators have a habit of making the excellent the enemy of the good, thus beating back any proposed reform that does not promise to solve all problems simultaneously or to lift all boats equally and at the same pace. Yet my participation in the process as a reformer keeps me hopeful that we will somehow muddle through, that the naysayers will give change a chance, and that we will aim for and achieve a synthesis of our twin ideals of excellence and equity.

CHAPTER 8

REINVENTING SCHOOLING:
UTOPIAN IMPULSES AND HISTORICAL SCOREBOARD

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REINVENTING SCHOOLING: UTOPIAN IMPULSES AND HISTORICAL SCORECARD

David Tyack

"Imagine a new generation of American schools that are light years beyond those of today." This is the utopian goal that the New American Schools Development Corporation (NASDC) poses for educational reformers. Chartered as part of President George Bush's "America 2000" education strategy, NASDC's task is to "unleash America's creative genius to invent. . . .the best schools in the world, . . .to achieve a quantum leap in learning." Don't be content with incremental change, said NASDC, but "assume that the schools we have inherited do not exist." This is no ordinary task, said President Bush; the redemption of society is at stake: "Think about every problem, every challenge we face. The solution to each starts with education. For the sake of the future--of our children and the nation--we must transform America's schools."[1]

In a mission with such high stakes, many leaders think it time to by-pass traditional educators and to turn to business and technology to rescue and transform education. The board of directors of NASDC is composed almost entirely of CEOs of large corporations, including the Commissioner of the National Football League. A for-profit business manages some public schools in Baltimore, Dade County, and Duluth. Buoyed by profits made by marketing news/advertising programs to public schools, Whittle Communications is designing a network of hundreds of for-profit schools. Christopher Whittle's design team includes only one experienced public educator, but he is confident that his new-model schools will provide a template of reform for all elementary and secondary education. He calls this business the "Edison Project" because he believes that his schools will be as superior to the average public school as a lightbulb is to a candle.[2]

Seventy years ago Thomas Alva Edison had similar dreams of transforming instruction. "I believe, he said, "that the motion picture is destined to revolutionize our educational system and that in a few years it will supplant largely, if not entirely, the use of textbooks." Maybe replace the teacher, too. Here is how one teacher of that time responded to this new dispensation:[3]

> Mr. Edison says
> That the radio will supplant the teacher.
> Already one may learn languages
>   by means of Victrola records.
> The moving picture will visualize
> What the radio fails to get across.
> Teachers will be relegated to the
> Backwoods
> With firehorses
> And long-haired women.
> Or perhaps shown in museums.
> Education will become a matter
>   of pressing the button.
> Perhaps I can get a position
>   at the switchboard.

Faith in electronic pedagogy has returned again and again as one form of the utopian impulse.

Many Americans revere inventors and entrepreneurs and glorify change, as soap-sellers know when they market the NEW Old Dutch Cleanser. Amid the crisis mentality and constant criticism of the public schools during recent decades, then, reformers have found a ready constituency when they promised major transformations of education, often in the form of a quick fix. The corporate advocates of private "performance contracting" to teach basic skills to potential dropouts, for example, counseled "maximum plausible optimism" in convincing the public (this term was borrowed from the pitch of aerospace contractors to the Pentagon). Major reform was really not that complicated. It required that mossbacks step aside and let new reformers, sleeves rolled up, step in to set things right.[4]

The first stage in reform was to convince people that that the present system of schooling was inefficient, anachronistic, and irrational--if not rotten. This has long been a strategy of utopians who condemn existing arrangements in order to substitute an alternative vision of the future. Blame the bureaucrats, bash the teachers.

During recent decades reformers who wanted to reinvent the public schools often turned to other social sectors for inspiration or support for the models of change they advocated--for example, to business, the federal policy establishment, higher education, or foundations. Appeals to the mystiques of technology, business management, behavioral engineering, and new organizational forms carried weight with influential decision-makers who wanted to reform schooling from the top down.[5]

As in the rationale for NASDC, reformers in the past have believed that if they could create new-model schooling--lighthouse schools or comprehensive transformations--their ideas would spread quickly across the educational landscape. This was an act of faith, for rarely did the advocates of new-model schools consult either history or practitioners. Indeed, why should policy analysts and entrepreneurs consult the very people who created the mediocrity of public education in the first place?[6]

In this chapter I shall begin by exploring a few examples of past attempts to reinvent schooling, to alter the traditional institutional forms of schooling.

The first is a comet called "performance contracting" that swept briefly across the pedagogical firmament when innovators claimed that corporations could do a better job of teaching the basics than the public school "establishment." The city that pioneered instruction for profit, Texarkana, Arkansas, became for a time "the Mecca of the educational world."7

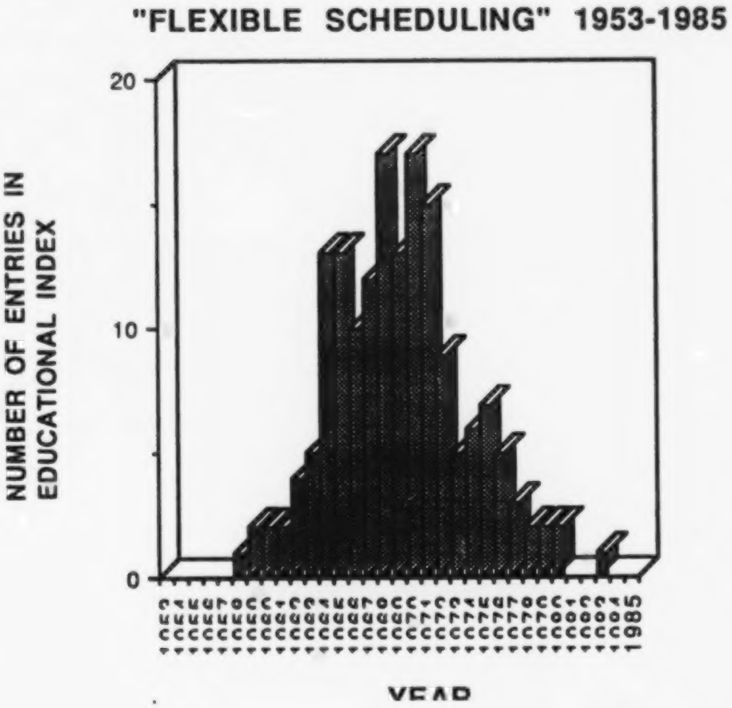
The second is the use of technology to revolutionize instruction --attempts to realize Edison's dream.

The third is the effort to reshape the structures of careers and incentives in teaching to resemble those in other occupations (focusing especially on merit pay).

And finally, I will examine the "comprehensive" reform of the high school--partly under the auspices of the Ford Foundation--in which no practice was to be taken for granted, while time, space, staff, and curriculum were all to be reconfigured flexibly.

What was the scoreboard of results from these attempts to remodel schooling? These differed by reform, as I shall suggest, but in the main, they had little lasting impact on public schools. Eventually, even those districts that did respond to the various utopian impulses tended to return in practice toward the mean of the traditional institutional forms.

Why do schools, when viewed historically, seem both faddish and resistant to change? Many reforms seem to sweep across the pedagogical heavens, leaving a meteoric trail, but then burn up and disappear in the thick air of institutional reality. Whatever happened? It is not easy to tell. There is a rich paper trail of such reforms in the advocacy stage, when people make grandiose claims for them, but when they fade, silence often ensues. Since success is often equated with survival, few people have bothered to chronicle transitory innovations. As the saying goes, success has many parents, but failure is an orphan. This graph, which shows articles on ~~performance contracting~~ "flexible scheduling" in journals cited in Education Index, illustrates the


"FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING" 1953-1985
NUMBER OF ENTRIES IN EDUCATIONAL INDEX
20
10
0
1985
YEAR

rapid rise and fall of policy talk about one reform.[8]

[insert graph]

The other side of the coin of evanescent reforms is the persistence of traditional organizational forms, which also needs to be explained. By "traditional organizational forms" I mean practices like the division of time and space, the allocation of students to classrooms, the splintering of knowledge into "subjects," and the teacher's authority to assign work to pupils and to assess their performance. Indeed, such patterns of pedagogy, some of them originally implemented as conscious reforms, have become so well established that they are most often taken for granted as just the way schools are.[9]

People are accustomed, for example, to elementary schools that are _age-graded_ institutions in whose _self-contained_ classrooms pupils are taught several basic subjects by a _single teacher_. High schools are organized somewhat differently. Students move every "period" (a _"Carnegie Unit"_ of about 55 minutes) to a new teacher who is a member of a _specialized department_ and who instructs about 150 pupils a day--in groups of perhaps 30--in a particular subject. In secondary schools, but generally not in elementary, students have some degree of choice of what to study. At every level, however, teachers are expected to monitor and control students, assign tasks to them, and ensure that they accomplish them. This kind of _batch-processing_ is usually teacher-centered and textbook-centered.[10]

Such basic features of schooling constitute by now a set of general cultural expectations shared, on the whole, both by professionals and the public. They shape the use of time, space, the division of students into groups, the departmentalization of knowledge into subjects, and the deployment and behavior of teachers. Periodically, innovators have challenged these institutional forms, which they perceive not as the reforms they once were but as straightjackets.

One way of approaching the transitory nature of many reforms that sought to remodel schooling, and the persistence of traditional institutional forms, is to question whether the familiar forms are in fact irrational and inefficient. If they were as dysfunctional as their critics assert, why were they so resilient? If one sees the status quo in schooling as much in need of improvement but doubts the value of the quick-fix, new-model mode of reform, what alternative approaches to reform make sense? These are issues to which I will return at the end of this essay.

The Business of Schooling: Performance Contracting

Like their predecessors in the Progressive Era, the business-oriented reformers of the 1960s and 1970s had ready-made technocratic solutions to educational problems (and often products in search of markets). Many of them thought the current administrators of schools too political, opposed to new kinds of instruction, incompetent as planners, and unaccountable for results. One approach to reform was to make the management of schools more businesslike by adopting new management and budgeting techniques developed by corporations, the military-industrial complex, university experts, and government agencies: Management by Objectives (MBO), Planning, Programming, and Budgeting System (PPBS), and Zero Based Budgeting (ZBB). Another was to treat public schools as a marketplace of instructional services in which corporations could compete and teach children effectively by using the latest technologies of instruction. Business methods, competition, incentives, new technologies--these could transform antiquated public schools into centers of efficient learning.[11]

School systems, like many businesses and the federal government, rapidly learned that the new planning and accounting systems were not the panaceas they were cracked up to be. PPBS, for example, cost a great deal of time and money, created new layers of bureaucracy, and heaped up piles of paper. An Oregon teacher expressed the opinion of many educators when she described PPBS as "Mickey Mouse in triplicate." In addition, education is intrinsically a value-laden and political enterprise. Despite its trappings of expertise and neutrality, PPBS moved decision-making upwards and toward the center but did not eliminate "politics." Although initially mandated by many states, PPBS fell out of favor in education as in business because, as policy analyst Aaron Wildavsky said, it was "tremendously inefficient" since its "inputs were huge and its policy output tiny."[12]

At first, many policy makers outside the schools and some educators inside them believed that performance contracting might provide a solution to the difficult task of teaching basic skills to underserved students. In Texarkana in the fall of 1969 over a hundred pupils identified as potential dropouts entered "Rapid Learning Centers" (RLCs) set up by Dorsett Educational Systems. In these carpeted, newly painted rooms they went to pick up a folder in which the teacher--called the "instructional manager"--had put the day's assignment and a record and filmstrip for each child. Then students plugged the software into a Dorsett teaching machine, put on the headset, and logged their time onto punch cards that were used to plan the next day's assignment. When they had correctly answered all the questions on the programmed lesson, they received ten Green Stamps. If they advanced a grade-level in reading or mathematics, they earned a transistor radio. The child who made the most progress for the year on achievement tests won the grand prize: a portable TV set. Diagnosis, prescription, achievement, reward--it was a learning system coupled with "contingency management." The goal: to accelerate the learning of children who were falling behind in school--and to make a profit for Dorsett, which had created the system.[13]

Texarkana represented the dawn of a bright day, some thought, when for-profit businesses would contract with school districts to use technology and scientific management of learning, well-laced with extrinsic incentives, to produce RESULTS--student achievement in the basic subjects. No results, no pay. There was basically no difference between schools and industry, said a systems analyst with experience at Lockheed when he took over as "center manager" at a public school in Gary, Indiana, the Banneker School run by Behavioral Research Laboratories (BRL). "I view things analytically," he said. "Keep out emotions. . . .You don't have to love the guy next to you on the assembly line to make the product. He puts in the bolts, you put in the nuts, and the product comes out." A Gary teacher retorted: "There's no way a man with that attitude can succeed in a school. No way."[14]

The worlds of the technocrats and the teachers were, indeed, miles apart. BRL had developed programmed books and materials to teach reading and saw the chance to run its own learning system in a Gary public school as a way to shake up what the chairman of BRL's board called the "mindless, inefficient, hideously mismanaged" public school system. There were, in name at least, no "teachers" at the Banneker School; instead, it employed a Center Manager, a Learning Director, five curriculum managers, 15 assistant curriculum managers, and twenty learning supervisors in a hierarchy of responsibility and pay. Just as students had done decades before in Gary's "platoon system," the students in the BRL school circulated from room to room (called "curriculum centers") to work on different academic subjects and fields like art, music, and physical education.[15]

Some leaders of teachers' organizations and educational policymakers protested that the systems people had radically restricted the goals of schooling to drill and practice on the basic skills and performance on standardized tests. The tests themselves, some argued, were faulty measures of achievement. Gains in test scores might be only temporary results of the "Hawthorne effect"--the positive impact of attention--fanfare, or carpeted and air-conditioned rooms. Many teachers considered extrinsic rewards to be inappropriate bribery for learning and questioned the effectiveness of "contingency management." One teacher in Texarkana said that "I wonder if the children are really learning or just storing a little knowledge for long enough to get the reward." Teachers complained that the prepackaging of learning robbed them of the chance to exercise their own professional knowledge and discretion. But the most fundamental criticism, and one that led people to legally challenge the BRL-run school in Gary and to close it down, was that public districts were abdicating their role in shaping public policy in education when they delegated instruction to private agencies.[16]

Dorsett and BRL were only two of dozens of corporations, large and small, that saw in performance contracts a way to make profit by teaching children who were lagging in academic achievement. A number of these companies saw schooling as a vast new market that might take up the slack in defense contracts that were winding down along with the Viet Nam War. Many school board members, government officials, and educational entrepreneurs were eager to give businesses a chance to raise levels of academic performance among these students. In 1970 President Nixon's Office of Economic Opportunity sponsored a performance contracting experiment in which 31 companies competed for performance contracts in 18 selected school districts (this parallelled another OEO experiment with markets in education, a voucher plan).[17]

The six companies that won the contracts agreed to receive no payment if pupils did not make a year's gain on standardized tests but stood to make a good profit if they did. Under Title I the federal government also subsidized twenty other performance contracts in 1970. In almost every case the companies relied on teaching machines and/or programmed materials, individual diagnosis and prescription of learning, and extrinsic incentives. Rarely did they experiment with other approaches to educational innovation. The resulting trend, said two observers, was "not so much toward educational reform under the initiative of the public sector as it is now toward marketing and sales with the private sector setting the terms. The public may find that in the majority of cases it is simply paying a higher price to put last year's product in this year's favorite package." The Chair of the House Education Subcommittee, Representative Edith Green, worried about the funds flowing to defense contractors entering the education business: "It is accurate to say that anyone with a brainstorm can come to Washington and get financing from the Office of Education or the Office of Economic Opportunity."[18]

Although Dorsett's instructional system in Texarkana became the model for most other performance contracts, in one respect it became a scandal to be avoided. One day the district's project director was visiting its Rapid Learning Centers to monitor the year-end test that would determine how well Dorsett had done its job. A boy mentioned to him that he had already had seen one of the test items--about a visit to a submarine. The cat was out of the bag. It turned out that in their daily lessons just before the big examination the students had been studying items taken from the test. The Centers were not just teaching to the test; they were teaching the test. The person responsible for this fraud explained that Texarkana had assigned too many low-I.Q. students to the program and the standard curriculum did not work with them. Under pressure to show results and to make a profit for the company, she wove test items into the daily lessons.[19]

The Texarkana scandal moderated but did not halt enthusiasm for performance contracting. It made government agencies like OEO and local districts more careful about getting independent audits, however, and these reports deflated the claims of the promoters. A study by the Rand Corporation in December 1971 reported that the experiment did speed up instructional change but that it focused narrowly on basic skills and introduced tricky problems of measurement and legal responsibility. The Rand researchers found a very mixed picture of test gains. When the Batelle Memorial Institute, the agency charged with evaluating the OEO experiment, presented its findings in 1972, the air went out of the balloon. In comparing the experimental classrooms taught by the companies with similar groups taught in the traditional manner, Batelle discovered that twice as many traditional classes scored better than the experimental classes in math and nine control classrooms did better in reading compared with six of the performance contracting groups. Overwhelmingly, there was no significant difference between the experimental and control groups. OEO discontinued its funding and shortly thereafter was dissolved as an agency. By 1975, after further negative studies, Education Daily announced that "performance contracting has been pronounced dead."[20]

As Myron Lieberman has pointed out, the brief "experiment" was flawed as a scientific and practical enterprise and thus it is not clear precisely what was being measured: performance contracting, incentive plans, differentiated staffing, new instructional technology, or what? But it did become clear that effective teaching of educationally disadvantaged children was no simple matter to be solved by business smarts, extrinsic incentives, and programmed instruction. And it was equally obvious that even with federal subsidies there were not rich lodes of profits for companies to mine in the serried hills of American public education. The hope for easy solutions and profits by pedagogy did not disappear, however. New reformers, salesmen, and political allies would come again to promise that the private sector could succeed where the public "establishment" had allegedly failed.[21]

Teaching by Machine: A Fickle Romance

Many Americans relish technological solutions to the problems of learning. It has long been so. Hear the rhetoric of another era: "The inventor or introducer of the system deserves to be ranked among the best contributors to learning and science, if not among the greatest benefactors of mankind." The time was 1841. The "system" was the blackboard, which another salesman forty years later described as "the MIRROR reflecting the workings, character and quality of the individual mind." And so it went with advocates of educational radio, film, television, and programmed learning who predicted pedagogical Nirvanas that never happened.[22]

The people who promised educational moonshots through technology were an assorted lot. Not surprisingly, many were business people who wanted to market their wares to the schools. Some were scholars and academic entrepreneurs--psychologists, for example, who thought that programmed instruction would rationalize pedagagy. Foundation officials seeking a quick impact on schooling sometimes saw the new media as a way around the briar patch impeding educational change. Some educational administrators who wanted their schools to be up-to-date embraced new technologies. A new specialist appeared in colleges, state departments of education, and school districts--the audio-visual expert--who had a vested interest as well as a faith in technology.[23]

In the top-down process of advocating and implementing technology, teachers were rarely consulted, though it was mainly their task to make it work. A small minority of teachers welcomed electronic learning, believing that it would motivate their reluctant students and make their own instruction more easy and effective, but most used the new devices minimally or not at all.

A recurring cycle of reform occurred with most forms of pedagogy by technology. They began with exaltation, a conviction that a new invention could transform education. Next came studies to document that electronic aids were at least as effective as teachers in conveying knowledge. Then arose disappointment as reports came back from classrooms about the imperfections of the reform and as surveys showed that few teachers were using the tool.[24]

Waves of enthusiasm for technology in education often have coincided with broader changes or concerns in society. Periods of advocacy of technology have typically had common features: worry over the costs of schooling, fear that teachers were incompetent (or at least in short supply), and some sort of domestic or external threat (the Depression, Sputnik, the Japanese economic challenge) that gave special urgency to education. In troubled times some people want to find a scapegoat or a quick fix.

The scapegoat in writings about technology has often been the teacher unwilling to climb aboard the new bandwagon. Some technologies sought to by-pass the classroom teachers through "teacher-proof" programs or electronic devices. Whatever the technologists might have hoped, behind the classroom door teachers remained the key influence on instruction. By and large, they used the technologies that fit familiar routines and classroom procedures--in other words, that helped them solve their problems of instruction. The rest they mostly ignored.[25]

Some inventions have in fact made their way into classrooms: the blackboard; cheap paper that replaced slates; books for each child made possible by sharp drops in production costs; paperbacks that supplemented textbooks; globes and maps; ballpoint pens that replaced the steel-nib pens that had replaced quil pens; and, though they were controversial, cheap hand-held calculators. More complex technologies have had much less impact on everyday teaching than did the simple, durable, reliable improvements like the chalkboard that enhanced what teachers were already doing.[26]

Advocates of film as a mode of instruction saw it as the very emblem of progressive pedagogy, for it promised to breathe visual reality into the spoken and printed word and to stir minds to activity. But again the companies that wanted to sell technical solutions and the educators who were supposed to use them tended to live in different worlds. An educational researcher committed to the use of films reported that teachers "failed to make their problems articulate to the commercial producers," while business people "failed to grasp or to study the nature of instruction and the complexity of educational institutions." Many of the early "free" films were thinly disguised commercials for products and resented as such by teachers. Especially to blame for the cool reception of teachers to film was "the stupidity which has characterized the advertising, propaganda, and sales methods of companies" that claimed that moving pictures might supplant textbooks and even teachers.[27]

Because the early hardware was expensive and required constant maintenance, while software was costly and needed to be shared by many teachers, film was first used in large cities and wealthy suburbs. Most districts had no projectors; rural schools often lacked electricity. In 1936, after a decade of florid claims about educational motion pictures, a survey of 21,000 districts (9000 replied) found that across the nation there were only about 6,074 silent film projectors and 458 sound-film projectors (it did not say how many of these were in good repair and actually in use). By

1954, when equipment was cheaper and more reliable, the NEA estimated that schools had one projector for every 415 students.[28]

But even when districts had the necessary equipment and films, most evidence suggests that teachers used educational films sparingly, except among a small cadre of enthusiasts. A study of 175 elementary teachers in New Haven, Connecticut, discovered that they ordered about 1500 films in one year, but two thirds of the orders came from 25 mediaphiles. When they investigated obstacles to the use of moving pictures, researchers pinpointed the teachers' lack of skills, the cost of purchase and upkeep of equipment, the inaccesibility of equipment, and not finding the right fit between films and class lessons.[29]

On its face, radio was a simpler medium to use than film. Again, lack of hardware originally limited diffusion of the reform, however. In the mid-1930s superintendents reported only about one radio per district. An expert on educational radio estimated in 1945 that only five per cent of children heard radio regularly in their classrooms. When principals in Ohio were asked what were the blocks to greater use of radio, they listed lack of radios (50%), poor equipment or reception (30%), and lack of cordination of radio programs with the curriculum. But advocates of radio education instead blamed teachers' "indifference and lethargy, even antagonism, toward this revolutionary means of communication."[30]

Television was going to be different, said reformers. In the 1950s, when the Ford Foundation entered the arena of electronic teaching with its subsidies and publicity, the campaign for instructional television gained momentum. Soon an airplane was circling over the Midwest beaming down programs to six states. Hagerstown, Maryland, developed a model system of closed-circuit television that promised a richer curriculum at less cost. By 1961 the Foundation had spent $20 million for classroom television, and the next year Congress appropriated another $32 million for that purpose.[31]

Despite unprecedented public attention, enthusiastic promotion, and unprecedented public attention, instructional television made slow headway. A survey of public schools in 1961 found only 1.65 TV sets per district. In the mid-1960s, as federal dollars flowed into the schools, districts that had been too poor to buy adequate audiovisual equipment were able for the first time to acquire television sets along with many other kinds of machines and software. But the machines often sat idle. In the 1970s teachers reported that they showed TV programs only two to four per cent of classroom time. A decade after classroom television was introduced with a flourish, a fervent advocate lamented: "If something happened tomorrow to wipe out all instructional television, America's schools and colleges would hardly know it was gone."[32]

As with film and radio, it was primarily nonteachers who initiated and pushed instruction by television. These reformers seldom asked teachers their advice and opinions; they just told them this was the way to go. When teachers responded enthusiastically, the technocrats were pleased. But this rarely happened. Why?

Over the course of six decades, a variety of explanations have surfaced. One we have discussed is the explanation often given by the disappointed reformers: Teachers are laggard and fearful if not incompetent. But from the teachers' perspectives, other reasons appear. One focuses on the hardware: There is not enough, or it is broken or faulty, or it takes too much time to arrange for it and use it. Another complaint is the software: It is inappropriate to the curriculum, doesn't fit the class schedule, or is of poor quality. The method of implementation from the top down--as school boards or policy makers or superintendents ordered or cajoled teachers to use a particular tool--provoked many teachers to dig in their heels or simply to put technology in the closet.[33]

But as Larry Cuban has argued, perhaps the most fundamental block to transforming schooling through electronics has been the nature of the classroom as a work setting and the ways in which teachers define their tasks. The regularities of institutional structure and of teacher-centered pedagogy and discipline are the result of generations of experience of teachers in meeting the imperatives of their occupation: maintaining order and seeing that students learn the curriculum. Teachers are willing, even eager, to adopt innovations that help them to do their standard job more efficiently and that are simple, durable, flexible, and responsive to the way they define their tasks.[34]

A minority of teachers have also welcomed electronic aids to learning and have incorporated them in their standard ways of teaching. But the values that infuse the occupation have generally made teachers skeptical toward learning by machine, eager to retain the patterns that work for them, intent on fostering the personal as well as the intellectual growth of children, and skilled at sabotaging changes imposed on them from above.

Transforming Teaching

The reformers who sought to reinvent schools through business methods, instructional systems, and technology rarely sought to see the world through the teachers' eyes. Ironically, this was also true of those who sought to alter the structure of teaching as an occupation and to change the incentives of teachers.

From time to time, school board members, foundation officials, business leaders, university professors, legislators, governors, and other reformers have concluded that existing incentives and career paths in teaching made no sense. Policy talk about merit pay, career ladders, and hierarchical forms of team teaching has been especially popular in periods when business efficiency was a popular theme and when competitive market solutions have been in favor. Treating schools as if they were ordinary market organizations has made sense to outsiders, but teachers have often questioned the assumptions underlying the model and opposed it passively or actively.[35]

Consider the present-day call for differentiating the roles and rewards of teachers as a means of attracting and retaining the most gifted instructors, creating meritocratic standards of performance and pay, and making schooling more efficient. Such strategies have appealed for decades to reformers in foundations, business people on school boards, legislators, professors, and media pundits. In recent years many states have passed laws mandating merit pay, career ladders, master teachers, and other ways to differentiate the functions and rewards of teachers.[36]

Both in the past and the present teachers have mostly resisted such reforms. They have not trusted the ability and fairness of administrators charged with assessing "merit." They have typically regarded merit pay not as an incentive but as a bother, a threat to professional comity, and irrelevant to the chief intrinsic rewards they experienced--seeing their pupils grow intellectually and socially. After spending decades to achieve the principle of the equality of all professionals--as represented in a single salary schedule for elementary and high school teachers and equal pay for female and male teachers--they have been skeptical about hierarchical models of team teaching and career ladders.[37]

Open conflict erupted, for example, when the school board in Kalamazoo, Michigan, decided to reward teachers differently in 1974. The American School Board Journal trumpeted the Kalamazoo plan as the end to lock-step pay and unaccountable staff. "Take it from Kalamazoo," the Journal said: "A comprehensive, performance-based system of evaluation and accountability can work." This judgment was premature. The merit scheme, in which "nearly everyone evaluated everyone else," choked on paperwork and provoked frustration, not superior performance. The administrators joined the United Automotive Workers union to fight merit pay, and the teachers' union managed to recall six of the seven board members who had supported differential compensation. But repeated experiences like this one in Kalamazoo did not prevent reformers from reinventing merit pay.[38]

The history of merit pay illuminates the different values and perceptions of teachers and of the outsiders who would motivate and control them by paying them according to their performance. In the nineteenth century in small school districts hiring took place in a more or less open labor market: Local school boards basically could hire whomever they wished at whatever was the going wage, for standards of training and certification were low or non-existent.

Probably most teachers then were not even graduates of secondary schools. Farmers on school committees selected teachers rather the way they would employ a hired hand or a servant to help in the house--to buy the best service for the lowest price. Teachers' salaries differed widely from place to place and even in the same one-room school when different teachers were hired to teach in summer and winter.[39]

From the point of view of those who believe in an open labor market as a guarantee of merit, this was an efficient system. In theory, at least, school boards hired the person who would provide the best service for the least money. In practice, educators complained, committee members were apt to hire inept teachers for extraneous reasons--they might be relatives, or members of a dominant church, or full of a manly bluster thought to be suitably cowing to the older boys in their classes. Male teachers almost always earned more than female, though there was growing evidence that women taught at least as well as men. A reform favored by educators was to make the labor market less open by restricting entry to teaching to those who were trained in pedagogy and certified. They hoped thereby to raise the quality of instruction and to hoist the miserable pay of teachers.[40]

In large cities the structure of the labor market in teaching was quite different from that in the countryside. Although there was plenty of nepotism and corruption in the selection of teachers, urban systems were much more bureaucratized. First, individual teachers generally did not bargain with lay boards in determining their salaries; instead, most districts published regular salary schedules. Second, these scales explicitly paid men more than women and secondary teachers more than elementary. This changed, however. In a series of revolts, beginning in cities like New York, women teachers organized to secure equal pay with men. Likewise, teacher organizations pressed state legislatures and school boards to adopt single salary schedules in which teachers at all levels received the same salary (if they had the same teaching experience and professional education).[41]

As teachers tried to increase the "merit" of their occupation, then, they sought to improve training and certification so that all teachers might be considered professionals. Likewise, the NEA's (mostly female) Department of Classroom Teachers argued for a single salary scale and against differential pay by sex on the egalitarian grounds that all members of the profession--in grade school or high school, male or female--had comparable responsibilities and deserved comparable pay (in fact, one might understand the single salary schedule as a pioneer example of what today is called "comparable worth").[42]

Such reasoning simply did not make sense to many people outside the schools or to some educational administrators obsessed with "efficiency." At the very time when organized teachers were attempting to create more uniform compensation, in the opening decades of the twentieth century, elite school board members and some superintendents were seeking to make teacher evaluations "scientific" and to link those ratings to salary increases. How do you motivate large numbers of teachers to perform beyond the minimum expectation? How do you get more teachers to excell when they work in isolated classrooms where inspection is infrequent? These basic questions facing school boards and superintendents led many of them to emulate business by creating the earliest merit pay programs, that is, programs that would allegedly pay teachers according to performance.[43]

The history of performance-based salary plans has been a merry-go-round. In the main, districts that initially embraced merit pay dropped it after a brief trial; only a small number of districts continued to use merit pay for decades. Susan Moore Johnson has commented that each time merit pay became an "educational vogue. . . it was considered a novel reform." In the 1950s merit pay became a fashionable idea and by the 1960s about ten per cent of districts had adopted some version of payment by performance. By the early 1970s, interest again declined, for just over 5 percent of districts said they had merit pay. A 1978 national survey found 115 districts (4 percent of those with more than 300 students) with provisions for payment for performance, and many of these did not in fact pay teachers differentially. When two researchers went back to those districts five years later they found only 47 still using performance-based compensation. These districts tended to be small, to have fairly homogenous student populations, and to employ merit pay in inconspicuous ways. Although there has been another resurgence of interest in merit pay in the 1980s, more than 99 percent of teachers are paid on a uniform salary schedule.[44]

Richard Murnane and David K. Cohen found six districts where merit pay had been in existence for more than five years. In these schools, they said, it was voluntary, paid teachers more for extra work beyond the classroom, kept the scale of money involved low (seldom over $1500 to $2000), and involved teachers in shaping the rules of the plan. They argue that what kept these plans going was precisely that these districts avoided making problemmatic distinctons between teachers based on their classroom performance. Instead, they used the plan to solved other problems in the district such as finding ways of bringing together teachers and administrators to discuss educational issues (e.g., the nature of evaluation in the district), finding ways of enhancing the public's perception that teachers are being held accountable, and providing chances for teachers to earn extra money by doing school-related activities.[45]

Why have so few schemes to pay teachers for their performance stuck? Murnane and Cohen argue that merit pay seldom works if its intent is to get teachers to excell because so little agreement exists among administrators and teachers over just what effective teaching is and how to measure it. In part, the complexity of the teaching act foils merit pay. Internal strife erupts over administrators' judgments that some teachers win "outstanding" marks and others only "average."

Clearly the outsiders who pushed merit pay have often misperceived what would in fact have motivated teachers to do a better job. This creates the problem encountered by some university professors who gave a workshop for teachers based on the principles of behavior modification. These instructors found that their incentive for completing morning tasks--a coffee break--offended rather than pleased the participants, who turned out to be Mormons opposed to caffein.

Johnson, who actually did ask teachers about incentives and disincentives, found that teachers had good reasons for opposing competition for the extrinsic reward of merit pay:[46]

> Promoting competition among colleagues would reduce rather than increase the productivity of schools because teachers would conceal their best ideas and pursue their own interests rather than the general good. Moreover, performance bonuses might perversely reward teachers for success with able students while discouraging efforts with those who progress more slowly. Finally, teachers resented policymakers' efforts to entice them with the prospects of one-time bonuses for a select few when many teachers held second jobs just to meet basic living expenses. By seeking to provide recognition for exemplary teachers, potentially at the expense of many others, the reforms threatened egalitarian norms that the profession supports.

Teachers are not afraid of evaluation, she insists: "they perform before exacting critics every day." What they dislike is being pitted in competition with one another or judged by arbitrary standards by people whom they do not particularly trust.[47]

While obviously teachers care deeply about receiving adequate salaries--and rarely do--they and the public have quite different perceptions of their sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. When polled about what bothered teachers the most, the general public listed poor discipline first and salaries second; teachers listed unfavorable public attitudes toward education first and salaries fourth. Over the years many studies have shown that teachers most highly value the intrinsic rewards of the occupation that come from seeing their pupils develop and that they treasure praise from students, parents, and colleagues. In 1975 Dan Lortie found that in Dade County, Florida teachers reported that the biggest extrinsic reward they received (37%) was "Respect from others" and the biggest psychic reward (an overwhelming 86%) was "Knowing that I have 'reached' students and that they have learned." Johnson found a similar pattern in the 1980s among the teachers she interviewed, though such rewards of respect and praise were all too infrequent.[48]

Merit pay, like the application of business methods, systems analysis, and technology to public education has sometimes had the unintended result of lessening, not enhancing, the very rewards that teachers find most important, for such reforms have all too often been accompanied by teacher-bashing and a lessening of public respect for the "wisdom of practice" and the personal relationships that teachers have created and treasured. Campaigns to reinvent incentives for teachers and the structure of teaching careers have rarely achieved their goals, for they have been out of synchrony with the values and practices of teachers.

Revolt in the 1960s and Early 1970s:

Making Schools More Flexible and Free

In the 1960s, an age of unrest and innovation, when rebels of all sorts were questioning the conventional wisdom in education, reformers proposed a basic rethinking of time, subjects, space, and class size. They believed that since humans had created institutional forms, they could change them as well--and must do so. Typically they regarded the old institutional forms as rigid, hierarchical, and based on a negative view of human nature. Students, the old system implicitly announced, were young workers who needed to be compelled to learn by their supervisors--teachers--in classes standardized in size, time, space, and subjects. Instead, the young should be seem as active, intellectually curious, and capable of taking charge of their own learning. If one started from that premise, the existing structure of pedagogy made no sense.[49]

Reinventing the Rousseauian notion that people are born free but are everywhere in chains, some radical reformers rejected the institutional form of the public school outright, advocating "free schools" and "schools without walls" to take the place of conventional classrooms, pre-set curricula, and traditional teacher roles. Some followed the lead of Ivan Illich in calling for the "deschooling" of society. Although "free schools" became for a time a hot topic in the popular media and won influential advocates, they flourished for only a short time. The notion of "schools without walls" became tamed in practice into more traditional off-campus activities such as vocational programs that allowed pupils to gain academic credit for working as salespeople in stores.[50]

Other reformers, more moderate in outlook and aspiration than the free schoolers or the deschoolers, proposed major organizational changes within the institution of the public schools. They called for ungraded and "open" elementary schools. At the high school level they developed blueprints of high schools in which

> time was a flexible resource (often called "modular scheduling");
>
> year-long courses in established fields were often chopped into "mini-courses" that expressed the current interests of students and teachers;
>
> teachers worked in teams rather than alone and taught students in large, medium-sized, and small classes;
>
> and older egg-crate classrooms were transformed into resource centers for independent study, rooms of different size for different teaching styles, and social centers where students could meet during time "modules" when they did not have a class.

Architectural and pedagogical forms should follow new functions, they argued, and new conceptions of education demanded new forms of instruction as well as open buildings.[51]

In the 1960s a coalition of influential organizations and individuals agreed that it was time to reform secondary education, to overthrow the Carnegie unit, the eggcrate classroom, the teacher-dominated traditional curriculum, students as passive learners, and the isolation of teachers from one another. Beginning in 1961 the Ford Foundation poured millions of dollars into "lighthouse" high schools to demonstrate the value of comprehensive attacks on the pedagogical status quo: flexible scheduling, variable class sizes, differentiated staffing and team teaching, the use of non-certified aides, new technology, and the rest. In 1968 the Danforth Foundation gave a grant of more than a million dollars to the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) for a Model Schools Project designed to create the "Schools of Tomorrow" incorporating the new ideas. University experts entered the reform partnership, developing computerized scheduling programs and training teachers for the new system.[52]

The experiment took place under favorable auspices, then. The decade of the 1960s was a time of optimism and urgency when comprehensive reform--reinventing education--seemed possible and attracted enterprising principals in the NASSP. The Ford and Danforth Foundations and the federal government (under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965) provided large amounts of seed money for schools deemed most likely to succeed. And changes did come rapidly. In Oregon, for example, where the Ford Foundation gave a statewide grant of 3.5 million dollars in 1962, many educators agreed to experiment with the new organizational forms.[53]

The secondary "schools of tomorrow," however, proved to be far less stable and less emulated than the institutions they were designed to replace. Many pedagogical inventions of the 1960s had a short half-life. "What Ever Happened to. . . ?" This was the question that Richard R. Doremus, superintendent of schools in Shoreham, New York, asked as he travelled about the United States in 1980-81 to visit schools famous for innovative programs of instruction a decade earlier. He found in most of them a regression to the traditional mean, in some no traces of the earlier reforms:

> In 1970 the educational critic Charles Silberman wrote that John Adams High School in Portland, Oregon, "may well be the most important experiment in secondary education," and Newsweek declared it the "Best Around." By 1980 its distinctive features--participatory democracy, an experimental core curriculum and mini-courses calibrated to student interests and social concerns, close and informal relations between teachers and students--had eroded. That year enrollment dropped to half what it had been a decade earlier, and the district closed the school.54
>
> In 1963 Life magazine featured the Wayland, Massachusetts, High

> School and its "new educational technique called team teaching, the one innovation that is both practical enough and sweeping enough to vitalize U.S. education today." Under a grant from the Ford Foundation, the high school introduced the "Trump Plan" of flexible-size grouping and scheduling of classes, team teaching, differentiated staffing with teacher aides, and special times and facilities for independent study. By the time that Doremus came to Wayland, the original advocates of the "Trump Plan" had left, and the school had reverted more and more to traditional patterns of instruction. Its new claim to fame was its classics program and the success of its students on the Latin Advanced Placement examination.[55]
>
> A similar fate awaited Northwest High School outside Kansas City, Kansas, portrayed as the wave of the future in 1971. In the name of student autonomy its principal praised its flexible scheduling, a "school-without-walls," independent study, mini-courses and electives, and a student mall where students could gather to talk with friends. Parents rebelled. Why was it, they asked, that their children scored low on standardized tests and could choose whether or not to attend classes? In three years a new principal was hired "to turn the school around." Down went most of the innovations, but critics continued to refer to the school as "the zoo."[56]

In many of the innovative schools the students themselves appreciated the new forms of flexibility, such as modular scheduling and classes of different sizes and free time during the school day. Reactions of teachers were very mixed. Some applauded the opportunity to work together, to revise the curriculum and create electives, and to experiment with new teaching techniques. In some districts teacher unions opposed differentiated staffing. Many teachers, feeling themselves in a goldfish bowl as visitors poured in to see the schools of tomorrow, grew weary of so much innovation all at once. High turnover among principals in the Model Schools Project hurt continuity in reform, especially since administrators had been the catalysts of change in most schools.[57]

Many communities grew tired of start-from-scratch reform and instead wanted the comfort of stable old patterns of schooling. A substantial proportion of the parents and other community members criticized the way students used their free time. When principals in flexible high schools identified problems encountered, 94 per cent said that low-achieving students had trouble budgeting time, 84 per cent claimed that that more students cut classes, 78 per cent found that teachers did not have as many individual conferences with students as expected, 84 per cent observed that teachers continued to dominate discussion even in small classes, and 72 per cent said that parents of children who were not performing well in school tended to blame the modular schedule.[58]

A scholar who evaluated the projects supported by the Ford Foundation observed that "without exception, questions of student autonomy and discipline were raised by granting free time. This, along with the perceived erosion of academic standards, resulted in pressure from the communities as well as within schools to revert to more traditional patterns of organization." He found that over half the experimental schools had dropped modular scheduling by 1970, and others had substantially modified it (recall that these were specially selected schools that had received grants and technical assistance as well).[59] ~~This graph shows the abrupt rise and fall of policy talk about~~ f~~lexible scheduling~~.[59]

~~[INSERT TOBIN GRAPH ON FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING]~~

In the past generation the Gallup polls on education have shown Americans deeply concerned about what they thought was lax discipline in the schools. Close behind has been preoccupation with apparently dropping academic achievement. By the middle 1970s people began to think that high schools were in decline and that the innovations of the previous decade were partly to blame. Under the new policy outlook, flexibility was a fault, not a virtue. Students should be in class for a regular period, supervised by their teachers. They should have fewer curricular choices, not more. Go back to the good old days was the theme of much criticism, while a California legislator summed up the purpose of new school laws as making "the little buggers work harder." While they would have used more decorous language, the urban educators of the nineteenth century would have approved the sentiment. The aim of schooling, wrote one leader in 1885, "is the imposition of tasks; if the pupil likes it, well; if not, the obligation is the same."[60]

A bold yet vulnerable challenge to traditional institutional forms, the rebellion of the 1960s and early 1970s ebbed rapidly, leaving behind here and there some new evidence of flexibility but the older institutional patterns still dominant. The Carnegie unit, not the module, was the winner.[61]

Conclusion

In this chapter I have suggested that the utopian impulses in recent decades to reinvent schooling--to challenge the basic institutional forms of public education--have often been shooting stars, meteors that attracted attention but left little deposit. Such attempts have a long history and are an integral part of a competitive economic and ideological system of a democratic market society. Some who promised Nirvana have been people eager to sell their products--"maximum plausible optimism" is an old story in advertising. Some have been politicians driven by the deadlines imposed by elections and by competition for public attention and funds. Some have been activists convinced of the need for fundamental change and persuaded by their own propaganda. But rarely have start-from-scratch reformers really understood the character of schools as social institutions or sought to learn either from the educators who labored in them or from history.

In raising questions about the shooting stars I do not mean to imply that reform is impossible or unnecessary. It is both possible and imperative. I do believe that effective reform requires understanding why the existing institutional forms have proved so durable. Scolding educators for being mossbacks or asserting that the present institutional order is irrational begs the issue of achieving lasting change. Here I reflect on two issues that I raised earlier: Why have traditional institutional forms been so resilient, and how might understanding this be helpful in devising realistic strategies of change?

I suggested earlier that in a society so prone to equating change with progress, it is not surprising that education appears faddish. Educators want to appear responsive to criticisms and to public demands for change. This is one way to retain the credibility of tax-supported and publicly-controlled schools as accountable institutions--to justify the faith that Americans have vested in education as an engine of social betterment. Politicians, foundation officials, business leaders, social critics and others feel compelled to do something about schools when they are considered to be in crisis. Indeed, the dream of a golden age--either in past or future--has often been a vital part of campaigns to revitalize education in the present.

Still, for all the apparent faddism in education, the institutional forms of public education have shown remarkable persistence. Why is this the case?

Part of the answer may lie in the cultural construction of what a "real" school is, in the public's belief system that gives legitimacy to traditional practices. Most Americans perceive the institutional forms and cultural scripts that govern public schools not as irrational survivals of a dysfunctional tradition, as break-the-mold reformers often assert, but as the way things are. Most people "know," for example, that students should not be given a choice about whether to attend class and that teachers are responsible for good order in the classroom. They "know" what a third grade is like, or a physics class. They "know" the rituals and routines of schooling in the same way that they "know" the ceremonies to expect in a Catholic mass. Culturally constructed categories like these reassure parents that their children are attending a standard school, and this may help to explain why parents usually rate local schools higher in quality than schools in general (which are, cosmopolitan reformers and the media assert, mediocre at best).[62]

For the most part, teachers share public cultural assumptions about the institutional forms of education. They attend schools as students when they are young, and they thus enter familiar roles as they move to the other side of the desk in becoming professionals. This on-the-job socialization helps to transform a multitude of individuals, often highly diverse in background and philosophy, who enter teaching each year and then behave in mostly similar ways in the classroom.[63]

Habit is a labor-saving device. Teachers have learned over generations how to work within the familiar patterns of instruction. These patterns persisted in part because they enabled teachers to discharge their culturally-defined duties in a predictable fashion. Behind the classroom door, in the loosely supervised world of the school, they have mostly been able to teach as they saw fit. To change institutional forms in education in a fundamental way could have created considerable cognitive and emotional strain, for it would not simply have added new tasks or pedagogical tools to familiar routines but would have required teachers to replace old behavior with new and to persuade both pupils and public to accept the new patterns as normal and desirable. Since evidence on outcomes of start-from-scratch reform was ambiguous, the practitioner "contemplating a change in classroom organization," Milbrey Wallin McLaughlin writes, "confronted. . .a complicated innovation that show[ed] no clear advantage over existing practices--at least in the ways that often matter most to school boards, voters, and anxious parents."[64]

But more is involved than such generalized cultural constructions and organizational roles and routines. State laws and the educational standards set by state departments of education have turned practices like age-grading or mandatory courses or certified teachers into legal requirements. Accrediting associations and college admission standards have done their part in institutionalizing pedagogical patterns such as Carnegie units.

The design and construction of school buildings, likewise, physically favored or constrained certain pedagogical practices. Whether conscious of their influence or not, architects and school planners have mostly shaped schools to the prototype of the self-contained rectilinear classroom, thus producing the familiar cellular "ice cube tray" building. When they did not--when they created large open-space classrooms--in time some kind of walls usually went up as teachers reasserted their familiar patterns of instruction.[65]

In important respects educational institutions are separate enclaves whose practices have a life, logic, and continuity of their own, shaped by the past and by broad cultural beliefs about the character of schools as distinctive social institutions. Schools have changed in the past, of course, especially through long-term incremental trends that fit the cultural scripts for education, such as increasing access for underserved groups and increased differentiation of structure and program. They need reform today, but the scoreboard of recent attempts to reinvent schooling suggests that starting from scratch has not been an effective strategy. What might be some implications for educational policy from the history of break-the-mold reforms in recent decades?

First, don't overpromise, even if it seems advantageous in the short run. Goals and claims should be anchored both in ideals--such as equality of opportunity and intellectual excellence--and in institutional realities. Hope is a great motivator, a trigger for revitalization movements, but hype can lead to what Larry Cuban calls the "acid rain" of cynicism. Setting high goals is an essential stage in reform, but raising expectations to a level likely to be achieved only by "schools that are light years beyond those of today" can quickly lead to discouragement or disillusionment. Perhaps even more than the average citizen, teachers tend to be allergic to utopian claims for reform, for they are the workers supposed to carry out break-the-mold reforms and often the people who are blamed when grandiose innovations fail.[66]

Second, don't try to change everything at once but instead graft change onto what is healthy in the present system. Instead of seeking to build "lighthouse schools" that often end up standing alone for a time and then regress toward the mean, the most pressing task is to improve education where families are most in need and to increase the number of "lighted schoolhouses" that are centers of community. Carefully evaluate what makes such good schools in needy neighborhoods work well and make that knowledge available to educators who can adapt such practices to their own schools.[67]

Veteran school reformers concur that attempts to reform public education by creating reinvented, prefabricated schools have brought meager results. A senior program officer of the Ford Foundation, Edward J. Meade, Jr., observes that[68]

> There are lessons that can be learned from past efforts which included the development of 'new schools,' e.g. the Ford Foundation's comprehensive School Improvement Program in the 1960s and the federal government's Experimental Schools Program of the 1970s. From those examples we know that rarely do new school "models" illuminate or instruct other schools.

The demonstration schools under Title III in the Johnson administration and the experimental schools mounted during the Nixon administration produced more red tape than emulation. "The main reaction of other schools [to the Title III demonstrations]," says former U. S. Commissioner of Education Harold Howe II, "was, 'Give us some money, and we'll do it too.'" Michael Kirst declares that "the [experimental schools] program is a classic case of multiple, vague, and somewhat contradictory federal objectives. . . .'Comprehensive change' [in which all institutional forms were questioned] is more a slogan than a concept to guide operations." Model schools can easily become "boutique" schools, says McLaughlin, especially if they use "resources beyond the reach of most schools and classrooms." The hard and essential task is to "tackle the tough problems that characterize many of America's schools--e.g. high rates of student mobility, diverse cultures and languages, dysfunctional families and communities."[69]

Third, enlist and honor teachers as the key people in reforming schooling. A subtext in much recent policy talk about reinventing schools is that existing teachers are a drag on reform, deficient if not dim. Surveys of teachers indicate that negative images of teachers in the media and in reform discourse is a major discouragement in their lives. No informed observer would say that teachers are paragons or do not need assistance in improving instruction, but the history of educational reform makes it clear that it would be impossible to improve everyday instruction without their active participation in the planning and implementation of change. Yet the section "Who Does What?" of America 2000 lists federal and state officials, the business community, and parents as key actors, while only mentioning teachers as one among a number of people active "at the community level."[70]

"To the extent that teachers or the education community have no effective voice in matters that affect the educational enterprise," writes Milbrey W. McLaughlin, "we should not be surprised if they do not accept responsibility for disappointing consequences." Reforms in education should be deliberately designed to be hybridized to take advantage of teachers' knowledge of their children, subjects, pedagogical skills, and community. Perhaps the most lasting and beneficial changes will come when reformers regard teachers as major trustees of the common good and honor their best practices and most humane values as major resources in reforming the schools.[71]

I am grateful to the Spencer Foundation and the Stanford Center for the Study of Families, Children, & Youth for support of the research on educational reform which Larry Cuban and I are pursuing. My debt to Larry Cuban is extraordinary--the ideas here derive so heavily from his written work and many conversations that it is difficult to distinguish his contributions and my own (though he may disagree with some of my evaluations). I also am grateful for the criticisms of other colleagues on an earlier draft of this essay: Lucy Bernholz, Elisabeth Hansot, John Meyer, Daniel Perlstein, Dorothy Shipps, William Tobin, and Decker Walker (of course they should not be held responsible for my errors).

FOOTNOTES--REINVENTING SCHOOLING

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CHAPTER 9

A HISTORY OF THE CHOICE DEBATE IN AMERICAN EDUCATION

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A History of the Choice Debate in American Education

Paul E. Peterson

"The essence of education is that it is religious."

--Alfred North Whitehead

The Aims of Education[1]

The concept of choice is deeply embedded in the American political tradition, yet the educational choice movement does not begin until the 1950s.[2] To understand why the political debate over choice in education emerges in the time and form that it does, one must understand the peculiar place of education in the American political tradition, the role of the courts in shaping educational policy, the changing role of Catholics in American society, the rising cost of education, the closing of the educational frontier, the politics of school desegregation, and the changing political strategies of the country's two dominant political parties.

The Liberal Tradition in America

While the European immigrants to the "New World" brought with them the "old world" technology, they left behind most of the trappings of crown, state and aristocracy.[3] In its place they constructed from the writings of Eighteenth Century rationalistic philosophers, and their own confrontations with a forbidding (but abundant) wilderness peopled by hostile nations, a political language that glorified individualism, hard work, economic self-sufficiency, self-reliance, localism, and minimalist government.

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[1] As quoted in Denis P. Doyle, "Family Choice in Education: The Case of Denmark, Holland, and Australia," in william L. Boyd and James G. Cibulka, Private Schools and Public Policy: International Perspectives (Philadelphia: Falmer, 1989), p. 43.

[2] I wish to thank Rick Hess for his research assistance and Allison Kommer and Kristin for their staff assistance in the preparation of this paper.

The language they constructed was not always internally consistent nor consistently applied. The right to life, liberty and property did not necessarily restrict the European--American's right to own slaves or to conquer technologically more primitive societies. But whatever the inconsistencies in their liberal ideals, the founders of the new nation believed they had the liberty to choose the way in which their children were to be educated. In the words of the radical Tom Paine, who made the clearest proposal for choice in education, governments should provide monies to parents to be used to send their children "to school, to learn reading, writing, and common arithmetic; the ministers of every parish, of every denomination, to certify jointly to an office, for this purpose, that the duty is performed."[4]

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[3] Louis Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1955).

[4] Paine, 1792, I:245, as quoted in David Kirkpatrick, Choice in Schooling: A Case for Tuition Vouchers (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1990), p. 34.

The Constitution written by the founders said nothing specifically about education. That was among the many matters to be left to the states. But the Constitution's First Amendment said the federal governments could not intrude upon the citizen's beliefs: "Congress shall make no law," it said, "respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Both clauses would prove critical to shaping the debate over school choice.

But if the founders said nothing directly about education in the Constitution itself, Congress did make clear in 1785, under the Articles of Confederation, that it expected that the government would provide financial support for educational purposes: in the new territories, one section of land out of sixteen was to be set aside for "the maintenance of public schools within the said township."[5] At that time the word "public" did not mean state-controlled, however; it only implied communal as distinct from parental or tutorial instruction. Two years later Congress, in the Northwest Ordinance, reaffirmed that "religion, morality and knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education (my italics) shall forever be encouraged."[6]

If the commitment to education was clear, there nonetheless remained considerably ambiguity as to how these schools were to be organized. If public schools were to be maintained by the township, did that imply each township was to have its own educational system designed by the township majority? Or did the founders, respecting the free exercise of religion, expect that the "means of education" would be provided by churches that would be supported by the revenues from the sixteenth section of township land? Perhaps the ambiguity was inherent to a legislative process that fudged distinctions to gain the consensus needed to obtain the 9/13 majority needed under the Articles. Or perhaps Congress expected each township to be so homogeneous that distinctions that loom large in the Twentieth Century had little meaning in the Eighteenth.

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[5] "Land Ordinance of 1785," in Henry S. Commager, ed. Documents of American History 6th Edition (New York: Appleton--Century--Crofts, 1958), p. 124.

[6] "The Northwest Ordinance," in Ibid., p. 131.

Clues to the answer to these questions are available from in Benjamin Rush's early "Plan for the Establishment of Public Schools" for Pennsylvania. He proposed that "free, public" schools be supported by letting each "scholar pay [the schoolmaster] from 1s6 to 2s6 each quarter."[7] Recognizing the ethnic and religious differences within the state, Rush suggested that "children of the same religious sect and nation may be educated as much as possible together."[8] Even Thomas Jefferson, who sought to limit the influence of the Anglican church on the educational institutions of Virginia, proposed only that "free" children be "entitled to receive tuition gratis, for a term of three years, and as much longer, at their private expense, as their parents, guardians or friends, shall think proper."[9]

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[7] Benjamin Rush, "Plan for the Establishment of Public Schools," in Frederick Rudolph, ed., Essays on Education in the Early Republic (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 6.

[8] Ibid., p. 7.

Yet it remained for John Stuart Mill to articulate most convincingly the liberal rationale for choice in education. Writing in defense of liberty at a time when the power of the state to control the processes of industrialization was becoming increasingly evident, Mill squared society's need for an educated populace with the family's right to religious liberty in a manner that has hardly been improved upon:

> Is it not almost a self-evident axiom , that the State should require and compel the education . . . of every human being who is born its citizen?. . .
>
> Were the duty of enforcing universal education once admitted, there would be an end to the difficulties about what the State should teach, and how it should teach, which now convert the subject into a mere battlefield for sects and parties, causing the time and labor which should have been spent in educating, to be wasted in quarrelling about education. . . . It might leave to parents to obtain the education where and how they pleased, and content itself with helping to pay the school fees . . . .[10]

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[9] Merrill D. Peterson, Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation: A Biography (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 147.

[10] John Stuart Mill, "On Liberty," in George R. La Noue, ed., Educational Vouchers: Concepts and Controversies (New York: Teachers College Press, 1972. pp. 3-4.

That Mill should discover choice while a more deeply entrenched liberalism in American should move in a more statist direction was itself a function of the pervasiveness of the American liberal tradition. Mill came to choice readily in order to cope with the social and political milieu in which he found himself. An established Anglican church, militant defenders of chapel, suppressed Irish Catholics, and Welch Methodists were all trying to shape the moral and religious instruction of the next generation. Only Parliament, the sole and supreme governmental authority, had the authority to resolve the controversy. Since the disputes could not be resolved, mass education evolved haphazardly and fitfully until a quasi-choice system was finally created under the Education Act of 1902.

In the United States localism rescued liberalism from confronting its ambiguities. Towns, cites, counties, and churches built schools at a pace that far surpassed European trends. Yet most families had as much educational choice as they wanted. The well-to-do relied on tutors and boarding schools. The rest relied on local schools that reflected the moral and religious code of the town and countryside in which they were embedded. The choice was among localities, not within them.

The Catholic Challenge to the Protestant Common School

As a fledgling public school system was being built in the early decades of the Nineteenth Century, it was challenged not by the dominant churches (that were often working in close collaboration with government officials) but by a swelling immigrant population from Catholic parts of Europe.[11] The changes were especially evident in Massachusetts, the leader in the construction of the system of state-directed education that was evolving. By 1852 over half the 11,800 students in the Boston schools of 1852 were foreign born. Distressed by the changing composition of the city's population, the Boston School Committee urged that

> We must open the doors of our school houses and invite and compel them to come in. There is no other hope for them or for us. . . . In our schools they must receive moral and religious teaching, powerful enough if possible to keep them in the right path amid the moral darkness which is their daily and domestic walk.[12]

Horace Mann, the state's first secretary to its board of education, was no less committed to exercising the moral influence of the state-controlled common school over an impoverished, immigrant population. A committed Unitarian, Mann had grave doubts about the effects of what he regarded as papist superstitions on the peoples of his state. "How shall the rising generation be brought under purer moral influences," he asked rhetorically, so that "when they become men, they will surpass their predecessors, both in the soundness of their speculations and in the rectitude of their practice?"[13] The Secretary's answer to this question was so effective that he won the following praise from the Congregationalist journal ,New Englander: "these schools draw in the children of alien parentage with others, and assimilate them to the native born. . . . So they grow up with the state, of the state and for the state."[14]

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[11] Carl F. Kaestle and Maris A. Vinovskis, Education and Social Change in Nineteenth Century Massachusetts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

[12] As quoted in Charles L. Glenn, Jr. The Myth of the Common School Amherst, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press, 1987), p. 84.

Catholic leaders were less pleased with the evolution of the country's state--controlled educational system than the Congregationalist editor of the New Englander. They saw little reason why Catholic children should acquire their moral and religious training in common schools operated by Protestants. But neither did they want parental choice in education. Instead, they demanded a corporatist solution in America along the same lines that was evolving in Europe. According to long-standing Catholic doctrine, education was the responsibility of the church, not the state. Rome insisted on separate Catholic schools not just because the public schools read the Protestant King James Bible but because state-administered secular education was an imposition of state authority into a realm reserved for the church. The goal of the Church was to educate every child of a Catholic family in a parish school. The proper role of the state was to recognize the corporatist interests in the society and aid the church in this objective. States should give funds to Catholics as well as to other major religious groups who wished to operate their own schools separate from the state-run institutions.

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[13] Ibid., p. 83.

[14] Ibid., p. 83.

Catholics won sufficient local power in some cities and states to win for a while some token state subsidies.[15] But such short-term victories only fueled nativist, Protestant fears of immigrants and papistry.[16] The anti-Catholic forces were so strong that in 1875 they were nearly able to secure passage of a constitutional amendment that explicitly forbid state aid to sectarian institutions. The amendment, which won approval of two-thirds of the House of Representatives, fell but one vote short in the Senate.[17] The chief sponsor of the proposed amendment, James Blaine, was nearly elected president in 1884. Only the backlash from a blatant attack on the Democratic party as the party of "Rum, Romanism and Rebellion" by a New York Republican clergyman barely deprived Blaine of the New York electoral votes need to defeat Grover Cleveland.

This nativist, Protestant antagonism to the growing Catholic minority was so intense that the outcome would not have been different, had Catholics proposed a liberal, choice-based solution to their educational problem instead of the corporatist approach they had settled upon. Yet the way in which the Catholic church constructed its argument for Catholic schools was not unimportant, for it helped to shape the debate over public education.

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[15] Paul E. Peterson, The Politics of School Reform, 1870--1940 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

[16] Diane Ravitch, The Great School Wars: New York City, 1805--1973 (New York: Basic Books, 1974).

[17] David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot, Managers of Virtue: Public School Leadership in America, 1820-1980 (New York: Basic Books, 1982), p. 77.

Dewey's Defense of a State-Directed School System

Public school advocates responded to this challenge to their legitimacy by proclaiming the legitimate authority of the state over the education of the young. In the ante-bellum period, the argument for state education, as made by Horace Mann and the Boston School Board, had been muddied by the virtual establishment of the Protestant faith within the common school. But in the latter part of the Nineteenth Century, a more secular argument for state--directed education was being developed in Germany. And it was this argument, as modified by America's greatest educational philosopher, John Dewey, which eventually became most persuasive to the country's educators. Discarding the liberal distinctions between state, society, and the individual, Dewey argued that "what the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all of its children. Any other ideal for our schools . . . destroys our democracy."[18]

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[18] John Dewey, School and Society 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1915), p. 7.

Although Dewey was careful not to reject explicitly the thinking of the founders, he was quite aware that he was rejecting an older, liberal conception of education. "In the eighteenth-century philosophy we find ourselves in a very different circle of ideas, " he wrote in Democracy and Education. "Their impassioned devotion to emancipation of life from external restrictions . . . found intellectual formulation in a worship of nature. To give 'nature' full swing" meant that inquiry had to be "freed from prejudice and artificial restraints of church and state."[19] Dewey pointed out that Immanuel Kant, the great German rationalist, who, like Mill, opposed state education, distrusted "rulers [who] are simply interested in such training as will make their subjects better tools for their own intentions." The rulers' interest "in the welfare of their own nation instead of in what is best for humanity, will make them, if they give money for the schools, wish to draw their plans."[20]

Dewey then posed what was for him the fundamental political question: "Is it possible for an educational system to be conducted by a national state and yet the full social ends of the educative process not be restricted, constrained, and corrupted?" For Dewey the German experience was of great significance in this regard. With Hegel, Dewey identified the source of knowledge and virtue not in nature but in historical processes and social relationships. Yet all previous history and all pre-existing social relationships were at least to some extent partial, parochial and limiting. Only with the creation of the modern state, with its all-inclusive set of social processes, could society realize its full potential. In this context, Dewey concludes approvingly, "effective pursuit of the new educational ideal required the support of the state. . . . The movement for the democratic idea inevitably became a movement for publicly conducted and administered schools."[21] Thus, Dewey notes, Germany was the first country to "undertake a public, universal, and compulsory system of education."[22]

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[19] John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York: Macmillan, 1916) p. 92.

[20] Ibid., pp. 95-96.

Drawing freely from Hegel, Dewey saw the school as the transmitter of the knowledge and culture that historical processes had created. The school was special in three ways: First, it simplifies the complexities of modern life so that they can be taught to young people in their parts, one at a time. Secondly, the school "eliminate[s], so far as possible, the unworthy features of the existing environment from influence upon mental habitudes. . . . [The school] is responsible not to transmit . . . the whole of . . . existing achievements, but only such as make for a better future society." Finally, the school is "to balance the various elements in the social environment, and to see to it that each individual gets an opportunity to escape from the limitations of the social group in which he was born." [23] This third responsibility is especially important in heterogeneous societies such as exists in the United States:

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[21] Ibid., p. 93.

[22] Ibid., p. 96.

> With the development of commerce, transportation, intercommunication and emigration, countries like the United States are composed of a combination of different groups with different traditional customs. It is this situation which has, perhaps more than any other one cause, forced the demand for an educational institution which shall provide something like a homogeneous and balanced environment for the young. . . . The assimilative force of the American public school is eloquent testimony to the efficacy of the common and balanced appeal.[24]

A more ringing defense of the common school could not be written. This same peal of and for the public school bell was struck time and again in subsequent decades. Yet Dewey, writing in 1915 in the midst of the Great War, realized that the bell's ring was not quite true: if the state controlled the schools, could not the state pervert education for its own nationalistic purposes?

Two limitations on the state-controlled public school must be admitted. First the state was constrained by the "tendencies, due to present economic conditions, which split society into classes some of which are made merely tools for the higher culture of others."[25] Second, national loyalties interfered with "a superior devotion to the things which unite men in common ends, irrespective of national political boundaries."[26]

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[23] Ibid., p. 28.

[24] Ibid., pp. 20-22.

At this point Dewey does not so much resolve the contradictions he has admitted as express a utopian faith that public educators have repeated for decades since. To offset economic inequalities, he called for "school facilities . . . of such amplitude and efficiency as will in fact and not simply in name discount the effects of economic inequalities." Dewey called for just equality of opportunity but genuine equality of educational and social outcomes. The school was to replace family, church, neighborhood association and peer group. The school was to become the all-embracing, comprehensive socializing institution in society. "Accomplishment of this end demands not only adequate . . . school facilities, and such supplementation of family resources as will enable youth to take advantage of them, but also such modification of traditional ideals of culture . . . as will retain all the youth under educational influences until they are equipped to be masts of their own economic and social careers."[27] In short, to do the task with which it is charged, the school must command such an enormous share of society's resources that the distinction between school and society disappears.

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[25] Ibid., p. 98.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

Nor was Dewey less utopian when he examines the limitations of the nation state. "The same principle [of complete control of the socialization of the young] has application on the side of the considerations which concern the relations of one nation to another," he wrote, continuing,

> It is not enough to teach the horrors of war and to avoid everything which would stimulate international jealousy and animosity. The emphasis must be put upon whatever binds people together in cooperative human pursuits and results, apart from geographical limitations.[28]

Dewey's ideals were undoubtedly democratic, magnanimous and comprehensive. Yet he showed little respect for diversity, particularity and choice. He showed little recognition of the potential for inefficiency, corruption, or abuse. Nor, despite the Great War, did he come to grips with the potential for political perversion inherent to the institution he was creating. Most seriously. he placed no limits on the power and resources of the public school, and, by extension of the state. In the end, Dewey failed to distinguish his position from Hegel's. If the school was to be controlled by the state, then the state must not only be good, it must be the Supreme Good, the most inclusive of all of society's institutions. In short, Dewey shifted educational thought in the United States nearly one hundred eighty degrees from the liberal grounds of the country's founders.

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[28] Ibid.

Surprisingly, Dewey's endorsement of the public school was at variance both with his own experience and with fundamental elements in his own intellectual tradition. Dewey himself did not rush to join progressive colleagues at the emerging land-grant colleges in Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan but chose instead to pursue his career at two private universities, the University of Chicago and Columbia University. The place where he developed and practiced his own educational philosophy, the Laboratory Schools at the University of Chicago, was quite separate from the patronage-ridden schools of the City of Chicago.[29]

Moreover, there was nothing in the progressive tradition of which Dewey was so much apart that required the imposition of an all-embracing state on a pluralist society. On the contrary, America's pragmatic progressives were attempting to navigate a narrow channel between the Gilded Age's untrammeled liberalism and the European left's totalitarian cry for an all-embracing state. Pierce, Adams, the Beards, Croly, Bentley and George Herbert Mead all celebrated variety, diversity, complexity, groups, and pluralism. The very multiplicity of interests in a society insured both equilibrium and progress. They explicitly rejected Hegel's demand for an all-encompassing regulatory state and Marx's reduction of society to two social classes. Dewey's insistence on public education was not only inconsistent with the liberal tradition; it did not even square with the pragmatist thinking in which his own thought was rooted.

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[29] Lawrence Cremin, The Transformation of the American School (New York: Random House, pp. 115-26.

Translating Thought into Practice: The Courts

It is easier to identify associations and juxtapositions than causal connections between philosophical expression and institutional practice. Did John Dewey, writing at the time the country's mass educational system was being created, simply articulate a plausible justification for arrangements being shaped by underlying economic and social forces? Or did Dewey help to shape progressive ideals which motivated the educators, reformers, and institution builders of the early Twentieth Century? Dewey himself was enough of an idealist to attribute the construction of the German educational system to Hegel, Fitsche and Pestalozzi. But he was enough of a realist to recognize that the German public school was in part a function of the political need to unify a country recently created out of a multiplicity of conquered, states, duchies and foreign territories.

In the United States the connections between thought and practice can best be unpacked by careful attention to the line of court decisions and opinions that tried to resolve the tension between the country's liberal traditions and the newly developing continental ideal of state-controlled education. Influenced by public school enthusiasts, state governments repeatedly attempted to extend the power of the state over the education of the children. The Supreme Court considered the argument that Dewey had fashioned, and at times gave credence to it, but in general it remained faithful to the more deeply ingrained liberal tradition. interpretation of the requirements posed by the Constitution,

Supreme Court interpretation of the appropriate state role in education begins in 1923, fifteen years after the publication of Dewey's Democracy and Education, as part of its effort to interpret the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment that forbade state denial of an individual's life, liberty or property without due process. Did this clause in the Fourteenth Amendment mean that the First Amendment which had forbidden federal interference with religious practice, now applied to the states as well? Did this clause mean that state governments, no more than the federal government, could establish a religion?

The first school-related case decided by the Supreme Court pitted the liberal and Hegelian conceptions of the proper role of the state directly against one another. Expressing a concern that hardly varied from the one Horace Mann and the Boston School Committee had articulated some eighty years earlier, the State of Nebraska had forbidden any school, public or private, to teach students in a language other than English, on the grounds that such a law would "promote civic development by inhibiting training and education of the immature in foreign tongues and ideals before they could learn English and acquire American ideals." [30] In rejecting the Nebraskan argument, the court drawing on the liberal tradition, insisted that the Fourteenth Amendment guaranteed "the right of the individual to . . establish a home and bring up children [and] to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience."[31] Two years later the court struck down on similar grounds an Oregon law compelling all children to attend a public school. Once again the State had made the remarkably Hegelian argument that " a compulsory system of public school education will encourage the patriotism of its citizens, and train its younger citizens to become more willing and more efficient defenders of the United States in times of public danger."[32] The court replied that the law "unreasonably interferes with the liberty of parents and guardians to direct the upbringing and education of children under their control."[33]

Not until 1940 did the court give signs of succumbing to the Hegelian spirit. Justice Felix Frankfurter justified a nearly near unanimous decision to uphold a West Virginia statute requiring that Jehovah's Witnesses salute the flag in public school ceremonies on the grounds that such activities promoted

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[30] Meyers v. Nebraska, p. 401.

[31] Ibid., p. 399.

[32] Pierce v. Society of Sisters, 268 U. S. 528.

[33] Ibid., p. 534.

"national unity, [which] is the basis of national security."[34] Yet just three years later, America's liberal tradition reasserted itself, and the West Virginia law was overturned. "Compulsory unification of opinion," wrote Justice Jackson in the midst of a war against fascism, "achieves only the unanimity of the graveyard."[35] Extending this line of reasoning, the court, in 1972, disallowed the application of a compulsory attendance law to two Amish children, ages fourteen and fifteen, whose parents opposed on religious grounds their continued attendance in a public school.[36]

If the court quite steadfastly rejected the most virulent applications of Hegelian doctrine, more subtle questions remained. Did the First Amendment (via the Fourteenth) prohibit the use of state resources by citizens for religious purposes so long as the state itself remains neutral with respect to religious activity? If so, when do such actions become tantamount to the establishment of religion that was also forbidden by the First Amendment?

Finding a way of avoiding religious establishment while still permitting the free exercise of religion took the Supreme Court considerable time and effort. For several decades, it seemed as if the court was wandering in a doctrinal maze. The court allowed states to help provide textbooks but not instructional materials in sectarian schools. It allowed reimbursement to parents for transportation to sectarian schools, but not for trips after the school day had begun. It allowed religious instruction during the school day off the school grounds but not on school premises. It forbade partial tuition reimbursement to parents sending children to sectarian schools but allowed a tax credit for which all families were at least theoretically eligible. Some claimed that the wall between church and state that Thomas Jefferson recommended and the court erected turned out to be as serpentine as the wall surrounding the University of Virginia campus that was also designed by Jefferson.

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[34] C. Herman Pritchett, The American Constitution, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959) p. 477.

[35] Ibid. p. 478.

[36] Wisconsin v. Yoder, 406 U. S. 205.

This claim no longer seems accurate. Though constructed haphazardly, the church--state wall took a definitely liberal shape in the 1980s. The Supreme Court became increasingly unwilling to provide any sort of direct aid to schools operated by religious institutions. At the same time the court allowed the resources of governments to be used by citizens for whatever purposes they preferred, regardless of whether or not these were religious. Traditional calls for aid to parochial schools have been called into question, while educational choice has been legitimized.

Consider first the court's increasing reluctance to provide direct aid to parochial schools. In its initial decision, the court, in 1930, ruled that state purchase of school books for children in private as well as public schools did not constitute an establishment of religion--even though the books went directly to parochial schools. The books, said the court, were for children, not the school.[37] Again, in Zorach (1952), the court allowed students to be released from school to receive religious instruction in nearby churches.[38] But after Zorach the court steadily circumscribed the use of state authority on behalf of sectarian education. It struck down a Rhode Island law which would have reimbursed parochial schools for a portion of the salaries of non-sectarian teachers.[39] It also denied state money for the maintenance and repair of secular portions of sectarian schools.[40] Even reimbursement for the costs of participating in a required statewide program of testing and evaluation was said to be unconstitutional.[41]

Perhaps the most decisive decision limiting state support of parochial education came in 1975 when the court, in Meek v.

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[37] Cochrane et al. v. Louisiana State Board of Education et al. 281 U. S. 370. This decision is reaffirmed in 1968 in Board of Education v. Allen, 392 U. S. 236.

[38] Zorach v. Clauson 343. U. S. 306. This decision substantially qualified the 1948 decision, McCollum v. Board of Education 333 U. S. 203, which had forbidden religious instruction within school buildings, because it permitted the use of the compulsory power of the state to retain some children in public school while releasing others for purposes of religious instruction.

[39] Lemon v. Kurtzman, 403 U. S. 602.

[40] Committee for Public Education and Religious Liberty v. Nyquist, 413 U. S. 756.

[41] Levitt v. Committee for Public Education and Religious Liberty, 413 U. S. 472.

Pittenger, struck down all but the textbook component of a state program providing aid to sectarian schools. The decision was especially significant, because it struck down much of the private school component of the compensatory education program that had been passed by Congress at the height of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society. Although Meek v. Pittenger did not directly declare the law unconstitutional, it sharply qualified one of the Great Society's greatest legislative achievements. When Meek was subsequently reaffirmed and extended in a bare majority (five to four) decision taken by the court in 1985 (Aguilar v. Felton),[42] the court made it difficult for private school supporters to expect any direct federal aid except for secular school textbooks. Virtually all other assistance provided directly to these institutions was impermissible. The curves in the wall were all but eliminated.

If it was now quite certain that the state could not directly aid religious schools, what about educational assistance to families whose children could choose between attending a secular or a sectarian institution? The court gave its first hint that such assistance was permissible under the Constitution in an observation made in 1973 by Justice Lewis Powell in a footnote to Nyquist. On the face of it, the decision was a victory for the public schools. It declared unconstitutional a New York state law that gave tax credits and tuition reimbursements to parents whose children attended nonpublic schools. But Justice Powell also said that the court was not passing judgment on a tax credit or tuition voucher arrangement that applied to all children: "We need not decide whether the significantly religious character of the statute's beneficiaries might differentiate the present case from a case involving some form of public assistance (e. g., scholarships) made available generally without regard to the sectarian--nonsectarian, or public--nonpublic nature of the institution benefitted."[43]

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[42] Aguilar v. Felton, 473 U. S. 402.

The Powell footnote in 1973 became court doctrine ten years later when the court approved a Minnesota state income tax deduction for expenses incurred in providing "tuition, textbooks and transportation" for children attending any elementary or secondary school.[44] The court distinguished the constitutional Minnesota tax deductions from the unconstitutional New York law on the grounds that the latter had granted a tax exemption only for private school expenses while the Minnesota law allowed an exemption for expenses involved in the attendance at any school. While public school students did not have any tuition expenses, they had other expenses, such as the cost of gym clothes, pencils and notebooks, that were deductible. Although most of the benefits of the tax deduction went to families sending their children to sectarian schools, such statistical considerations were not relevant to determining a statute's constitutionality.

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[43] Committee for Public Education and Religious Liberty v.Nyquist, 413 U. S. 756.

[44] Mueller v. Allen, 463 U. S. 388.

In sum, despite the influence of Dewey's writings within the public school community, they had less influence over court doctrine. From time to time the court toyed with a statist or corporatist understanding of the relationship between government, education, and religious practice, but these proved not to be the building blocks for a wall of separation that nonetheless recognized parental freedom to practice their religious traditions. This triumph of the liberal tradition in the courts soon had its effect on the choice debate in American education.

The Changing Place of Catholics in American Politics

The increasingly insistent liberalization of court doctrine was occurring, strangely enough, at a time when the Catholic religious tradition was becoming an increasingly legitimate and respected part of American pluralism. As the courts were becoming certain that state monies could not be used to facilitate the work of sectarian schools, Catholics were acquiring the political power to demand state support. The call for educational choice was one way of accommodating powerful trends moving in opposite directions.

As late as 1928, New York Governor Al Smith had suffered a humiliating defeat in his run for the presidency--in good part, many thought, because the majority felt a Catholic president would obey political instructions issued by the Vatican. Political animosity was accompanied by social snobbery. As late as the 1940s, Catholic schools were regarded as socially inferior, highly regimented, intellectually restricted, scientifically backward redoubts of conformity and reaction.

These sneers and fears dissipated with the increasing prosperity and international responsibilities of post-war America. Italian, Polish and Irish Catholics were incorporated into the economic, social, and political mainstream. Immigrants became naturalized citizens, and their children natural-born Americans. The pope becomes an ally in the fight against East European Communism. Catholics voted overwhelmingly for John Kennedy, the first presidential candidate of Catholic affiliation since Smith.

Significantly, Kennedy was not only elected president but he became a martyred hero. Pope John XXIII and the Second Vatican Council adapted the Catholic religious tradition to modern realities, softening Protestant animosities. Republicans discovered the advantages of appealing to the Catholic vote, nominating William Miller in 1964 as the party's first vice-presidential candidate of Catholic affiliation. Meanwhile, Catholic voters, constituting more than 20 percent of the electorate, discerned the benefits of political independence.[45] Catholic schools became not only respectable but, according to several national studies, performed even better than their public counterparts.[46]

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[45] A. James Reichley, The Life of the Parties: A History of American Political Parties (New York: Free Press, 1992), p. 361.

Catholic leaders sought to capitalize on their community's newly achieved political power by renewing the demand for government aid to nonpublic schools. Though their political strategy would in retrospect prove faulty, their thinking at the time was not unreasonable. The emerging issue of federal aid to education seemed to open up a new opportunity to discuss the issue. Since early court rulings on the constitutionality of state aid were ambiguous, and the post--New Deal Supreme Court was known to be reluctant to declare a Congressional statute unconstitutional, there seemed to be a good chance that carefully constructed federal aid to nonpublic schools would be considered constitutional. Also, Catholics seemed to hold the balance of power on educational issues in the House of Representatives. Republicans and conservative southern Democrats were opposed to any and all federal school aid for fear it would lead to federal control. No bill could be passed without a unified northern

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[46] James S. Coleman and Thomas Hoffer, Public and Private High Schools: The Impact of Communities (New York: Basic Books, 1987); James S. Coleman, Thomas Hoffer and Sally Kilgore, High School Achievement: Public, Catholic and Private Schools Compared (Basic Books, 1982); Anthony S. Bryk, Valerie Lee, and Julia Smith, "High School Organization and its Effects on Teachers and Students: An Interpretive Summary of the Research," in Choice and Control in American Education: The Theory of Choice and Control in American Education, edited by William H. Clune and John F. Witte (Philadelphia: Falmer Press, 1990); John E. Chubb and Terry M. Moe, Politics, Markets and America's Schools (Washington, D.C. Brookings Institution, 1990.

Democratic party, and northern Democrats could not be unified without some concessions to Catholic interests.[47]

When Catholic demands for federal aid to private schools were countered by Protestant and Jewish cries that such aid constituted a violation of the separation of church and state, a majority coalition could not be formed and no major education bill was passed during the Truman, Eisenhower and Kennedy Administrations. Only when Lyndon Johnson, the master of legislative compromise, recast federal aid to schools as compensatory education for poor children, was it possible to strike the requisite political bargain. Federal monies would go to poor children in both public and private schools.[48]

As in the 1850s, the Catholic victory was Pyrrhic. Control over the distribution of compensatory education dollars was left to state education authorities, agencies often dominated by public school supporters hostile to Catholic interests.[49] Even worse, groups of Protestant, Jewish and secularists initiated attacks on the federal programs in the courts. Instead of legitimating the corporatist philosophy which Catholic leaders espoused, federal aid spawned a legal attack in an arena where the liberal tradition was the most secure. Although the court never declared the congressional law itself unconstitutional, it struck down virtually every conceivable program (other than textbook provision) set up within its framework. By 1988 only 3.3 percent of private school students were receiving services under the compensatory education program, as compared to 11.1 percent of public school students.[50] It was time for the church to think in more liberal categories.

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[47] Ralph Munger and Richard Fenno, National Politics and Federal Aid to Education (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1962).

[48] Philip Meranto, The Politics of Federal Aid to Education (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1967; Eugene Eidenberg and Roy D. Morey, An Act of Congress: The Legislative Process and the Making of Education Policy (New York: Norton, 1969); Hugh Davis Graham, the Uncertain Triumph: Federal Education Policy in the Kennedy and Johnson Years (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984).

[49] Jerry T. Murphy, "Title I of ESEA: The Politics of Implementing Federal Education Reform," Harvard Educational Review 41 (1971), pp. 35-63; Denis P. Doyle and Bruce S. Cooper, Federal Aid to the Disadvantaged: What Future for Chapter 1? (Philadelphia: Falmer Press, 1988).

A liberal political argument in defense of Catholic interests had already been developed in 1958 by a Jesuit priest, Virgil C. Blum, the first scholar to write a full-length treatise on the virtues of choice in American education.[51] Couching his argument in straight-forwardly liberal categories (including appeals to Jefferson and Mill), Blum asserted that religious liberty was violated in a society that imposed heavy financial costs on those who wished to have their children educated within a particular religious tradition. To remedy this defect, he proposed tax credits to families who sent their children to private schools. As the cost of education continued to escalate and constitutional objections mounted, Catholic leaders came to realize that Blum and his colleagues were correct in recasting Catholic concerns in a language consistent with the liberal tradition.

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[50] Department of Education, Office of Research and Information, Center for Education Statistics, U. S. Digest of Education Statistics 1991, (U. S. Government Printing Office, 1991), Table 351, p. 370.

[51] Virgil C. Blum, Freedom of Choice in Education (New York: Macmillan, 1958).

The Cost of Education

If the demand for choice was stimulated in good part by the growing social and political acceptability of Catholics in American society, it was urged forward by the increasing cost of educational services. Costs were rising because education was becoming increasingly labor--intensive. While manufacturing processes were substituting capital for labor and using fewer workers to produce more and better products, schools were increasing the ratio of adults to students. Even though educational research failed to prove that class size was related to learning rates,[52] educators continued to favor smaller, more intimate learning environments. Nationally, the average pupil--teacher ratio in public schools declined from 26.9 in 1955 to 17.6 in 1987 (see Table 1).

As a result, the per pupil cost of public education climbed steadily throughout the post-war period. Even in inflation--adjusted dollars, the increasing cost of education was staggering. Between 1950 and 1989 total schools costs per pupil (in 1989 dollars) increased from $1,617 dollars per pupil to

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[52] Eric A. Hanushek, "The Economics of Schooling: Production and Efficiency in Public Schools," Journal of Economic Literature 24 ((September, 1986), pp. 1141-77.

$6,180 per pupil (Table 2), nearly a fourfold increase after inflation.

These trends affected private as well as public schools. Although per pupil costs in the private sector were less than public--sector expenditures, the upward trend in the cost of private education was actually steeper than in the public sector. Rising private school costs were driven largely by rapidly declining pupil-teacher ratios. In 1955 private schools had an estimated average class size of 31.7, five pupils more than the public sector average; by 1987 average class size in private schools had fallen to 15.5, nearly two pupils less than the average in public schools (See Table 1). Because class size was falling so rapidly in the private sector, per pupil expenditures necessarily rose. As can be seen in Table 2, they climbed from $622 per pupil in 1950 to $3,091 in 1989, a five fold increase (compared to a fourfold increase in the public sector). If private school costs in 1989 were still only half those of the public school, families nonetheless found it ever more expensive to choose a private school.

The effects of rising costs on the demand for private schooling was initially obscured by the renewed commitment to education made by the Catholic church in the period immediately after World War II. Responsible for more than 80 percent of the students educated in private schools, the church had chosen to use its new wealth and social acceptability to expand its educational program at the elementary level. In the decade immediately preceding the election of John Kennedy as president, private school enrollments increased from 3.4 to 5.7 million students or 10.8 to 12.8 percent of the school age population (See Table 3).[53]

But rising costs overwhelmed religious commitment. Between 1959 and 1969 the percentage of students attending private school fell from 12.8 to 9.3 percent, a fall so steep that President Richard Nixon established a National Commission on School Finance. Noting that nonpublic schools were "closing at the rate of one a day" the President made it clear that "the specific problem of parochial schools is to be a particular assignment of the Commission."[54] Two years later, the Commission recommended federal aid to nonpublic schools through tuition tax credits and the following summer the House Ways and Means committee began holding hearings on tax credit proposals.[55] Terrence Cardinal Cooke, Archbishop of New York, speaking for the U. S. Catholic conference, testified that "a tax credit . . . . would provide assurance to parents of their right to a choice in education."[56] Nixon subsequently included the tuition tax credit in his 1973 legislative agenda.[57]

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[53] Digest of Education Statistics, Table 3, p. 12.

[54] Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1970, pp.32A-33A.

[55] Ibid., 1972, p. 819.

[56] Ibid., 1972, p. 821.

[57] Ibid., 1973, p. 11.

Efforts to pass tuition tax credits continued in both House and Senate throughout the seventies.[58] Private school supporters came closest to succeeding in 1978 when a school tax credit passed the House and a college tax credit passed the Senate. But the Senate members of the conference committee called to adjudicate differences between the two bills would not agree to the school tax credit, and both pieces of legislation died.

The issue nonetheless achieved enough visibility in 1978 that long-standing patterns of legislative support and opposition now became clearly delineated. House Republicans voted in favor of tax credits by a 102 to 35 vote, while the Democrats voted 159 to 107 against them. Most of the Democratic minority in favor the legislation came from northern congressional districts with sizeable Catholic populations. Southern Democrats were firmly opposed to a program that provided few benefits to the mainly Protestant population living in their region. The pattern of support and opposition in the Senate fell along roughly similar lines; however the larger fraction of Republicans (16 out of 38) voting against the credits was enough to doom the legislation.[59] The national Republican party, however, attributed the defeat to the opposition of the Carter Administration. In any case, the coalition supporting tuition tax credits never again came close to winning a legislative majority.

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[58] For an account of the legislative situation in 1976, see Ibid., 1976, p. 61.

[59] These events are described in Ibid., pp. 248-255.

During the 1980s private school enrollments stabilized at around 9 percent of the school population. But it remained to be seen whether this was a temporary respite from a continued long-term downward trend driven by the ever increasing cost of education. Meanwhile, the burgeoning cost of public education was causing both parents and taxpayers to look carefully at the returns they were receiving on the country's investments.

The Closing of the Public School Frontier

In the years immediately following World War II, the public school frontier closed. Virtually all the major goals of public school educators had been achieved. Nearly every state required that children between the ages of six and sixteen attend school. Most young people were earning the coveted high school diploma. School teachers in all states needed at least a four-year bachelor's degree with the requisite number of pedagogical courses. School administration had been taken out of the hands of patronage-hungry school boards and placed in the hands of professionally-trained administrators. The little one-room school houses had been closed to make way for educational oases located in the larger towns of rural America. To accommodate the wartime and postwar baby boomers, new, updated school buildings were being opened with incredible rapidity. Despite the increase in the size of the school-age population, per pupil school expenditures were rising while class size was falling. John Dewey's dream was becoming a reality. Schools were remaking society.[60]

Or were they? When gaps have been closed, when bridges are crossed, when expectations have been fulfilled, doubts necessarily emerge. Now that the elementary and secondary educational system had finally been constructed and reformed, it was quite understandable that citizens and educators would look at the structure Jack had built.

Conservatives were the first to express dissatisfaction. Less enamored than educators with child-centered pedagogy, they called for a return to basic education. As early as 1953, Arthur Bestor and University of Chicago president Robert Hutchins separately called for a return to teaching fundamentals and inculcating students in the classical tradition.[61] Especially significant was the questioning coming from the University of Chicago, the very university where Dewey, Charles Merriam, George Herbert Mead, and so many others had once propagated the theories and ideals of the Progressive Era. Appointed Chicago's president in 1929, Hutchins was a classicist who believed that educated people should be schooled in the canon of literature and philosophy that, boiled to its essentials, was contained in the Great Books that he eventually selected for publication by the

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[60] Peterson, the Politics of School Reform, , Ch. 10.

[61] Arthur Bestor, Educational Wastelands (1953); Robert Hutchins, The Conflict in Education (1953).

Encyclopedia Britannica. Rejecting the Deweyian notion of education as inquiry into contemporary problems, Hutchins constructed at the university a core curriculum based on the philosophical and literary classics. He also attracted to Chicago classical economists who rejected Keyensian doctrines popular in the Ivy League universities and Aristotelian political philosophers, such as Leo Strauss, who rejected behavioral approaches to social science. The Laboratory Schools founded by John Dewey was transformed from a progressive experiment into a haven for faculty members seeking to avoid the mediocre, racially changing public schools. Chicago was becoming an intellectual hothouse in which an aristocratic tradition was being combined with liberal principles that had inspired classical economists since Adam Smith.

It was in this milieu that the first tuition voucher proposal was constructed by the future Nobel prize-winning economist Milton Friedman: "Governments . . . could finance [education] by giving parents vouchers redeemable for a specified maximum sum per child per year if spent on 'approved' educational services. Parents would then be free to spend this sum and any additional sum on purchasing educational services from an 'approved' institution of their own choice. The educational services could be rendered by private enterprises operated for profit, or by non-profit institutions of various kinds."[62]

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[62] Milton Friedman, "The Role of Government in Education," in Robert Solo Economics and the Public Interest (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1955), p. 127. That it was very much the

Written in arcane economic language and published in 1955 in a diverse, undistinguished collection of essays, Friedman's proposal initially fell on deaf ears. Americans were too pleased with their international prowess and too concerned about the Cold War to have doubts about public schools. When sputnik was put into the orbit, the solution was not tuition vouchers but to give more money to public schools for mathematics and science.[63]

But the doubts initially expressed by classicists and basic education enthusiasts began to spread as the new science of testing cast doubt on the progressive myth that American schools were steadily expanding and improving. The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) was created in the fifties to identify the most able high school students, regardless of the curriculum to which they had been exposed. Two decades later, declining SAT test scores would be cited as definitive evidence that the public school curriculum was failing.[64] SAT test scores, by themselves, did not provide decisive information about the state of American

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University of Chicago milieu shaping these ideas is further suggested by the fact that in this same year University of Chicago's education professor Proctor Thomson endorsed Friedman's proposal in a journal edited by the university's Department of Education. See Procter Thomson, "Educational News and Editorial Comment," The School Review LXVIII (April, 1955), 189-200.

[63] Paul E. Peterson, "Background Paper," in Twentieth Century Fund, Making the Grade (New York: Twentieth Century Fund, 1980), pp.70-76.

[64] Diane Ravitch and Chester E. Finn, Jr., What Do Our 17-Year Olds Know? (New York: Harper & Row, 1987).

education.[65] But the results from the SAT tests were consistent with an array of other studies of trends in student achievement. The hopefully named National Assessment of Educational Progress found very little progress in the learning of students at either the elementary or secondary level. Comparisons with the performances of students in other countries revealed that the American schools, far from being the best in the world, were hardly above average among industrialized countries. Japanese students were performing strikingly better. Finally, a number of studies began showing that students in private schools outperformed their public school counterparts--even when results were adjusted to take into account the greater selectivity of the private school students.[66] To the great surprise of the country's Protestants and Jews, Catholic schools appeared to do a better job of teaching not only religious dogma but math and English as well.

With each new study placing still another nail in the coffin in which the myth of public school improvement was being buried, the interest in one or another variant of Friedman's proposal quietly grew. Still, Catholics were too interested in federal aid or tax credits and Republicans too fearful of federal control to give the Friedman proposal the attention it deserved. Not until a group of left-wing reformers revamped the tuition voucher proposal would it become fit for political action.

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[65] Those taking the test were those who wanted or needed to include SAT results as part of their college application, and the number and characteristics of students so inclined varied from year to year, making year by year comparisons misleading. Also, since only a third to a half of high school graduates took the tests, SAT results did not provide a comprehensive view of what was happening in school.

[66] See note 42.

The Desegregation of Public Schools

As the frontier of expansion and reform was closing, a new frontier was opened by the Supreme Court's Brown decision declaring school segregation unconstitutional. The ensuing debate over racial desegregation and integration shaped the debate over choice in contradictory ways. It turned parental choice into a code word for racial segregation, thereby invoking the implacable opposition to choice on the part of the civil rights movement. But choice also became the most promising tool for achieving stable racial integration in public schools.

In the aftermath of the Brown decision, most southern states adopted parental choice plans in the hope and expectation that blacks could be pressured into choosing all-black schools. When this strategy failed, four states--Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Virginia--passed legislation establishing voucher-like arrangements for children who chose to go to a private rather than a public school.[67] Federal courts declared these choice plans unconstitutional on the grounds that "the law was designed to establish and maintain a system of segregated schools."[68] Quite clearly, any tax-aided system of choice could not foster school segregation.

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[67] George R. La Noue, "Editor's Note," in La Noue, p. 30.

So from the very beginning the modern call for choice in education was tainted by its segregationist potential. In a footnote to his initial essay on tuition vouchers, Milton Friedman admitted that "public financing but private operation of education has recently been suggested in several southern states as a means of evading the Supreme Court ruling against segregation. But, said Friedman, the solution to racial discrimination is not legal compulsion either for or against segregation but parental choice:

> The appropriate activity for those who oppose segregation and racial prejudice is to try to persuade others of their views; if and as they succeed, the mixed schools will grow at the expense of the nonmixed, and a gradual transition will take place. So long as the school system is publicly operated, only drastic change is possible.[69]

Much as Friedman feared, a number of drastic organizational devices for achieving racial integration were proposed. School boundaries were changed; children bused; large, campus-like high school settings for students from a broad geographical reach were designed. Most of these efforts to achieve racial integration provoked extraordinary political controversy, and many were never fully implemented.[70] Yet Friedman's prognostications were rather wide of the mark. Far from producing a drastic transfiguration, Brown made only minimal modifications in the racial composition of America's public schools. As can be in seen in Table 4, 63 percent of black students were still attending predominantly minority schools in 1989, just 13 points less than the percentage in 1968. Thirty-two percent were attending schools that were virtually all minority schools, only 7 points less than the percentage attending essentially all-minority schools in 1972. Despite the fact that schooling was public, the processes of racial integration were extraordinarily gradual.[71]

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[68] Poindexter v. Louisiana, 275 F. Supp. 833 (1967), as quoted in Ibid., p. 45.

[69] Friedman, p. 131.

Amidst all this cacophony, the approaches that provoked the least controversy involved an element of parental choice. Most of these were built around the concept of the magnet school, which was expected to attract both white and minority students from across the city. Magnet schools had special themes, such as the sciences, performing arts, vocational education, language instruction, or college preparation. Most received additional funding and enhanced flexibility in the recruitment of teaching staff in order to insure higher quality educational services. Admission to magnets was often selective in that the performance of students in lower grades was taken into account in determining admission. Even when no formal selection criteria were applied, magnets tended to recruit the more able and ambitious students.

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[70] Gary Orfield, Must We Bus? Segregated Schools and National Policy (Washington, D. C.: Brookings, 1978).

[71] Gary Orfield, The Reconstruction of Southern Education: The Schools and the 1964 Civil Rights Act (New York: Wiley--Interscience, 1969; Gary Orfield, Must We Bus? Segregated Schools and National Policy (Washington, D. C.: Brookings, 1978).

Magnet schools seem to have assisted desegregation processes; at the very least, they seldom were more segregated than central--city schools in general. The academic performances of students in magnet schools was generally superior to those in other public schools, though it is uncertain whether this was due to better instruction or more able, more motivated students.[72] Yet Dennis Doyle's overall assessment in the mid- 1980s reflected the judgment of most informed observers: "Magnet schools are not a panacea, . . .[but] they can and do meet the objectives set for them, including higher academic standards and greater integration."[73]

The magnet school concept proved to be the most popular of all choice programs. By 1981 the Department of Education was able to identify 1,018 operating schools that it was willing to label magnet schools. Two hundred fifty-nine of these schools were receiving monies under the government's desegregation assistance program.[74] The program was in fact so well-received that when the Reagan Administration asked Congress to eliminate desegregation assistance, it went along with bipartisan congressional efforts to preserve the magnet school component. As late as 1991, the federal government was granting over $100 million to local districts to finance magnets.

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[72] The characteristics of magnet schools are well described in Rolf Blank, "Educational Effects of Magnet High Schools," in William H. Clune and John F. Witte, eds., Choice and Control in American Education II: The Practice of Choice, Decentralization and School Restructuring (Philadelphia: Falmer, 1990), pp. 77--110. See also Robert Dentler, The National Evidence on Magnet Schools (Los Alamitos, California: Southwest Regional Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, Occasional Paper Series, February 1991).

[73] Denis P. Doyle, "Magnet Schools: Choice and Quality in Public Education," Phi Delta Kappa 66(4) (December, 1984), p. 269.

The magnet school approach was soon generalized and given the label "public-school choice". Examples of public school choice ranged from a gradual extension of the magnet school concept (37 percent of all schools in Buffalo, New York were magnet schools in 1984) to complete freedom of choice of any public school within a school district (East Harlem, New York; Cambridge, Massachusetts) to between-district choice among schools within a state (Minnesota).[75]

Two district-wide choice plans won national commendation. Both the East Harlem program, started in 1974 and operating in twenty-three schools by 1989, and the Cambridge program, initiated in 1980, were complimented for the gains they made in curricular diversity, student achievement, and parental satisfaction.[76] The Cambridge program also facilitated racial integration.

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[74] Ibid., pp. 267-268.

[75] Ibid., p. 268.

Minnesota undertook the pioneering state-wide public-choice program in 1987. A renegade Democrat, Governor Rudy Perpich, secured approval for the choice plan from a Democratic state legislature despite the intense opposition of teacher organizations.[77] The legislature enabled students both to obtain high school credits for courses taken from colleges and universities and to transfer to any district in the state, subject to four restrictions: 1) transportation to the district line must be provided by the family; 2) the receiving school may declare itself closed to incoming students; 3) the receiving district may refuse a student for lack of space; and 4) the transfer must not adversely affected the desegregation processes in Minneapolis, St. Paul, or Duluth. Because of these restrictions, participation in the program was inhibited by transportation costs, elite suburbs such as Edina, Minnesota excluded themselves from the program, and white students living in any of the large central cities were denied access to suburban schools.[78]

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[76] R. S. Peterskin and D. S. Jones, "Schools of choice in Cambridge, Massachusetts," in J. Nathan, ed., Public Schools by Choice (St. Paul: the Institute for Learning and Teaching, 1989), pp. 125--148; S. Fliegel "Parental Choice in East Harlem Schools," in Ibid., pp. 41-54; Christine H. Rossell and Charles L. Glenn, "The Cambridge Controlled Choice Plan," Urban Review 20 (1988), p. 75-93. But see the more critical review by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, School Choice: A Special Report (Princeton, New Jersey: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1992), Ch. 3.

[77] Tim L. Mazzoni, "The Politics of Educational Choice in Minnesota," in William L.Boyd and Charles T. Kerchner, The Politics of Excellence and choice in Education (Philadelphia: Falmer, 1988), pp. 217-130.

Despite these limitations, the program gained steadily in popularity. Approximately 5 percent of the high school student population, 5,900 students, exercised the college option in 1990. Participation in the transfer program lagged during the program's first two years, but in 1989 students requested transfers in 80 percent of the participating districts and an estimated 3,200 students made use of the program. The program was continuing to expand in the 1990s.

Magnet schools and, by extension, public--school choice were criticized for their elitist tendencies. Either through formal selection criteria or through self-selection, magnet schools tended to serve an academically or socially superior clientele. The racial desegregation that occurred was usually limited to children of the middle and upper middle classes. The less motivated, less academically oriented students from less advantaged homes remained in neighborhood schools that were now deprived of what were once their most able students.[79]

Magnet schools were also said to be only a token response to the problems faced by big city school systems. By concentrating resources on a few schools that were patronized by the city's more influential residents, they deflected attention away from the overall plight of central--city schools. It was argued, furthermore, that public--school choice was limited choice. With choice contained within the public sector, families were unable to consider religious schools, alternative schools, single-sex schools, or schools catering to gays and lesbians.

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[78] Colleen Larson et al. Education Choice 1990. pp. 29-37.

[79] For excellent discussions of these issues, see Gary Orfield, "Do We Know Anything Worth Knowing About Educational Effects of Magnet Schools?" and David A. Bennett, "Choice and Desegregation," in Clune and Witte, 1990, pp. 119-52.

The Crisis in Urban Education

Magnet schools were one sign that choice could be put to egalitarian as well as right-wing purposes. Other choice approaches had an ever more explicitly equalizing thrust. While they seemed to be extensions of Friedman's 1955 proposal, they owed more to the civil rights movement than they did to University of Chicago classicism.

The civil rights movement of the late fifties and early sixties expected that a combination of law suits, political demonstrations, and federal intervention would desegregate big city schools in the North as well as the South. Some (mainly white liberals) felt that inter-racial contact would by itself enhance the educational skills of blacks and other minorities; others (mainly blacks) felt that by bringing races together minorities could finally win for themselves the same quality services whites were enjoying. But determined white resistance to racial integration by most central--city whites frustrated both blacks and white liberals and convinced many that significant racial integration could not soon be achieved.

As important as the overt, political resistance to desegregation was the accelerating white flight from the central city. Even by 1971, seventeen years after Brown, whites constituted no more than 43 percent of the students in the schools of nineteen of the largest central cities. By 1986 the percentage white in these cities had fallen to 22 percent (see Table 5). Whites with school-age children had left for the suburbs.

Not only were central--city schools becoming resegregated into virtually all-minority organizations, but they were developing a reputation for extravagant incompetence. Central city schools, it was said, were run by teacher organizations more interested in protecting seniority and staff privileges than educating students.[80] Big city schoolhouses, it was asserted, were infested with neighborhood gangs, drug dealers, and ethnic hatreds. Urban bureaucracies, it was claimed, hampered principals and teachers with mindless regulations.[81]

It is easier to document the assertions than to ascertain the actual state of affairs. It is uncertain whether big city school systems are extravagant but the data presented in Table 6 comparing per pupil expenditures in big cities with the national average hardly suggests that big city schools lacked the necessary fiscal resources. As compared to the national average, big cities of the Rust Belt were spending even more money per pupil in 1987 than they had been in 1950. Whether or not the schools were using these resources as effectively as they once did is harder to determine--in large part because big city school systems resisted attempts to measure their educational outcomes.[82] Yet few Americans thought that central--city schools provided anywhere near as high quality an educational experience as did the schools in the surrounding suburbs.

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[80] Josh Barbanel, "A Hard Lesson in Living with Seniority Rules: Teacher and Gifted Fourth Graders are being Pulled Apart by Union Contract Clause," New York Times (January 19, 1993), p. B1.

[81] For a description of the deteriorating Chicago public school system, see G. Alfred Hess, Jr. School Restructuring, Chicago Style (Newbury Park, California: Corwin, 1991); for a popular account of Boston's troubles, see Common Ground.

Whatever the reality, the belief was important, for it accelerated not only the processes of white flight but also the demand for choice in urban education. The most vocal critics were often associated with what was known as the new left, who, unlike the Communists and Socialists of the old left, had as many doubts about the institutions created by the modern welfare state as John Stuart Mill. Critic Herbert Kohl reported that the bureaucratized schools of New York were destroying the lives of the children contained therein.[83] Kenneth Clark, the black social psychologist, attacked the racism of the public schools of Harlem.[84]

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[82] Paul E. Peterson, "Are Big City Schools Holding their Own?" in John Rury, ed.,Seeds of Crisis (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993).

[83] Herbert Kohl, Thirty-six Children New York: New American Library, 1967).

[84] Kenneth Clark, Dark Ghetto (New York: Harper & Row, 1965).

Acting on these and similar criticisms, reformers in several cities were able to persuade big city school boards to establish experimental alternative schools that would be given enough autonomy from regulations and requirements that they could explore alternative educational approaches. Between 1968 and 1971 alternative school supporters established the Parkway Program in Philadelphia, the Harlem Preparatory School in New York, the Off Campus High School in Bellevue, Washington, the Lower East Side Preparatory School in New York City, the Gateway High School in New Orleans, the Exploratory Learning Center in Tucson, Arizona, the Chicago Public High School for Metropolitan Studies, and Markles Flats Junior High School in Ithaca, New York. In subsequent years, additional alternatives were formed in Minneapolis, Los Angeles, Grand Rapids, Michigan, and elsewhere.

The alternatives were usually small schools that explored unconventional teaching strategies and recruited students who were failing in traditional classrooms. They frequently received outside funding from a foundation or government agency. No one was compelled to attend these schools, so they became schools of choice. In most but not all cases, their student bodies were predominantly white.[85]

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[85] This description is taken from Daniel Linden Duke and Irene Muzio, "How Effective are Alternative Schools?--A Review of Recent Evaluations and Reports," Teachers College Record 79(3) (1977-78), pp. 461-83.

This approach was generalized in 1970 by a group of scholars headed by Christopher Jencks of the Harvard School of Education, who proposed that big cities construct a system of alternative schools by means of tuition vouchers. In a plan developed under a grant from the poverty program's Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), this group, known as the Center for the Study of Public Policy (CSPP), proposed that big cities establish an Educational Voucher Agency (EVA), which would distribute vouchers to parents, who could then use these vouchers to attend an approved school.[86] Unlike Milton Friedman, CSPP was quite willing to impose a hefty number of constraints on any school that sought to be "approved" by EVA. To insure equal educational opportunity, approved schools could not ask parents to supplement vouchers with their own funds. They also had to accept all applicants or choose randomly among applicants, if the number exceeded the supply of school places, except that half the applicants were to be chosen so as to avoid discriminating against minorities.[87]

Even though cast in egalitarian terms, the CSPP proposal was harshly condemned by liberal commentators. They criticized the plan for "shor[ing] up parochial schools, easing "the tax burden on upper-middle-class families," weakening "an already weak public educational system," and adversely affecting "desegregation."[88]

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[86] David K. Cohen and Eleanor Farrar, "Power to the Parents?--The Story of Education Vouchers," Public Interest 48 (1977) p. 73.

[87] Judith Areen and Christopher Jencks, "Education Vouchers: A Proposal for Diversity and Choice," in La Noue, pp. 49-57; Christopher Jencks, "Education Vouchers: Giving Parents Money to Pay for Schooling," New Republic, July 4, 1970, pp. 19-21.

Despite these criticisms and without any interest group pressure or sign of public enthusiasm for the idea, OEO attempted a demonstration of the CSPP plan. One can hardly blame OEO for trying. The agency was an innovative, experimental, intensely politicized organization that had been created within the Office of the President at the height of the Democratic party's war on poverty. It was now trying to survive the animosity of Nixon Republicans committed to its extinction. (In 1974, when Republicans finally did extinguish the agency, they transferred the responsibilities for vouchers to the newly created National Institute of Education). Emphasizing that tuition vouchers had been initially proposed by the now well-known conservative economist, Milton Friedman, and insisting that they were consistent with the Republican party's rising interest in educational choice, OEO hoped it could find ways of linking its anti-poverty mission with Republican doctrine. In 1971 it announced that it would sponsor a number of tuition voucher plans in communities that wished to attempt the experiment.

The idea was considered in Seattle, San Francisco, Rochester, Gary, East Hartford, and a group of towns in New Hampshire. But local opposition, not least from teacher and civil rights organizations, precluded undertaking the experiment everywhere but in Alum Rock, a fairly small school district of 15,000 students--55 percent Latino, 12 percent black--not far from San Jose.[89] Here in northern California public-school choice would get its first try, largely because a new school superintendent saw it as an opportunity to obtain federal dollars to implement his own plan for administrative decentralization.

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[88] Eli Ginzberg, "The Economics of the Voucher System," Teachers College Record 72(3) (February 1971), pp. 373-82, as reprinted in La Noue, p. 107. See also George R. La Noue, "Vouchers: The End of Public Education," in La Noue, pp. 129-45.

Vouchers in practice turned out to be quite different from the principles laid out by CPPS. The first thing to go was random assignment: parent groups insisted that schools first enroll applicants from the neighborhood, then admit outsiders if space was still available. Alum Rock next abandoned the efficiency principle. Teachers who lost their jobs because of falling enrollments were guaranteed jobs at district headquarters. And just as teachers could not fail, neither could schools succeed. At the end of the first year, tight limits were placed on school enrollments, insuring that no school would grow inordinately at the expense of the system.

Finally, entry of new schools into the tuition voucher market was tightly controlled, thereby jeopardizing one of the basic principles of improvement through competition. Initially, no new schools could become eligible for vouchers. Eventually, the state legislature allowed new schools to enter the demonstration, provided they were under the "exclusive control" of local authorities and operated in accordance with teacher union policies. The new schools were also subject to existing teacher certification, curriculum, and student discipline regulations. This regulatory labyrinth was attempted by only one alternative school, and it failed.

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[89] Laura H. Salganik, "The Fall and Rise of Education Vouchers," Teachers College Record 83(2) (1981) p. 273.

The Alum Rock experiment was nonetheless a modest success. Schools began to diversify their curriculum, parental satisfaction increased, and teachers and principals secured greater control over the school curriculum. However, we do not know whether students learned more in school.

While the Alum Rock experiment was being implemented, law professor John Coons at the nearby Berkeley campus of the University of California, was putting together, with Stephen Sugarman and William Clune III, the first state-wide plan for educational choice. These scholars had been part of a prolonged, frustrating legal campaign to equalize the fiscal resources of local school districts in California and other states. By the early seventies, the three had decided the issue was not a school district but a family issue. School resources needed to be equalized among families, not just among geographically defined units. This could be achieved, they claimed, by giving each family a tuition voucher, the value of which varied inversely with family income. Each family could spend as much of its income on the education of its children as it wished, but the tuition vouchers available to lower income families would be larger so that resources available for education would be the same for all families.[90] In short, Coons, Sugarman, and Clune (CSC) went CPPS one better on the egalitarian front. Poor people would not only have as much money for education as rich people; they would have more. Even John Dewey might have been pleased.

Public Opinion, Presidential Politics and Educational Choice

Public opinion on tuition vouchers would seem to be evenly divided. But as one of the most acute analysts of public opinion, V. O. Key, once observed, understanding the state of public opinion is tantamount to studying the Holy Ghost--its influence is everywhere present but extraordinarily difficult to identify. According to surveys of public opinion, the percentage favoring vouchers over during the twenty years after the initiation of the OEO experiment averaged 45 percent while the percentage opposed averaged 42 percent (see Table 7). Thirteen percent had no opinion. Changes in opinion from one survey to the next did not vary by much more than what could be produced by sampling error, and no trend in public opinion over time is discernable.

Analysts usually interpret such stability in public opinion as evidence that the public has solid convictions on the issue in question.[91] Taken at face value, Americans were closely but intensely divided over tuition vouchers. Yet when efforts were made to translate these opinions into votes, the outcome, far from being closely contested, regularly resulted in sounding defeats for tuition vouchers. Michigan voters rejected vouchers in 1978 by a three to one margin. Supporters of the CSC initiative in California were unable to secure enough signatures to put their proposal on the ballot. Oregonians defeated vouchers by an overwhelming vote in 1990, and Coloradans similarly turned down a voucher initiative by a two-thirds vote in 1992. During the 1980s bills to establish a tuition-voucher plan were introduced in thirteen states, but no statewide plan won legislative approval.[92]

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[90] John E. Coons, Stephen D. Sugarman, and William H. Clune III, "Reslicing the School Pie," Teachers College Record 2794) (May 1971), pp. 485-493, as reprinted in La Noue, pp. 59-67. See also John E. Coons and Stephen D. Sugarman, Schools of Choice (Berkeley: University of California, 1978).

Public opinion was more than just the views expressed by individuals in response to pollster questions. It was also voter response to campaigns by organized groups for and against a particular proposal. Opponents of tuition vouchers were sophisticated, organized, well-financed, and politically resourceful. They included teacher organizations, public school administrators, faculty at schools of education, parent and other lay groups organized by the public schools, trade unions, and civil rights organizations. Teacher organizations, especially, viewed tuition vouchers or any other choice proposal as threatening to their bargaining position. As teacher leaders well knew, the transformation of a quasi-monopoly or highly-regulated oligopoly into a competitive industry weakens trade union power and adversely affects employee compensation. To prevent this from happening, teacher organizations, with the help of their political allies, mobilized vast intellectual, financial, and campaign resources against any and all tuition voucher or other choice proposals.

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[91] Munger and Fenno, National Politics, p. ??; Benjamin Page and Robert Shapiro, The Rational Public improve citation.

[92] Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, School Choice: A Special Report (Princeton, New Jersey: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1992), pp. 63-64.

While the interests and resources opposed to choice were substantial and well organized, supporters of choice were few in numbers, lacking in resources, and, for the most part, with few vested interest in the outcome. A few policy entrepreneurs built careers by promoting the idea. Catholics and other religious groups had much to gain in the long run, yet the benefits were too distant and uncertain to make an inordinate amount of political effort worthwhile. Poor minorities attending the worst schools in large central cities probably suffered the most from the public school monopoly,[93] but they had few financial or other political resources with which to impress either voters or policy makers. As a result, tuition voucher proposals were defeated by decisive margins in both legislative and referenda arenas. Proponents had little more than an idea to peddle.

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[93] Paul E. Peterson, "Monopoly and Competition in American Education," in William H. Clune and John F. Witte, eds., Choice and Control in American Education: The Theory of Choice and Control in Education (Philadelphia: Falmer, 1990), pp. 47-78.

Despite the one-sidedness of group strength, the issue became a matter of partisan debate. Although parties are often regarded as consensus-building, issue-avoiding institutions, in this case they came close to evening what was otherwise a one-sided contest. Partisan involvement in the choice issue steadily increased during the seventies and eighties, in part because during this era the two parties each sought to paint their opponents as homes for the special interests. The Democrats tried to tie Republicans to big business, big agriculture, and right-wing extremists. The Republicans attempted to connect Democrats to trade unions, spendthrift bureaucrats, and those dependent on government largess. To carry out these strategies, each party looked for issues with which it could identify itself with the diffuse interests of a broad public while painting the opposition as beholden to a special interest. As a consequence, the parties became involved in the choice debate.

A comparison of the positions taken by the Republican and Democratic parties reveals how an issue that was initially nonpartisan or bipartisan became a contentious part of the partisan political debate. Before 1968, neither party paid any attention to school choice; the main issue for presidential debate involved the appropriate type of federal aid that could be given to local schools.[94] But, gradually, the enthusiasm for choice swelled within the Republican ranks, while the Democratic party became increasingly hostile.

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[94] Joseph J. Scherer, "The Donkeys vs. the Elephants; Evolution of the Education Platform in Partisan Politics," National Association of State School People Bulletin, 73 (November, 1989), pp. 20-25. The Republicans did give some support to tax credits to offset college tuition in 1960 and 1964, but they took no position

The political forces shaping these partisan positions are quite easily detected. In the wake of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the struggle over school desegregation, and the racial turmoil in large central cities, Republicans saw the possibility of building a new political coalition that would weld together urban ethnics (many of whom were Catholic) with southern white Protestants, now seeking alternatives to the newly integrated public schools. To win urban ethnics to the coalition, Republicans became increasingly committed to tax credits, tuition vouchers, and other choice proposals. At the same time Republicans became increasingly critical of teacher organizations, which the party identified as a vested interest inhibiting educational reform.

Meanwhile, the Democratic party, after initially expressing some support for tax aid to families with children in nonpublic schools, became ever more antagonistic to the concept of choice. The 1976 presidential nominating and electoral process may have been critical to this transformation within the Democratic party. In that year the National Education Association, the largest of the teacher's organizations, became actively engaged in partisan politics, encouraging members to participate in the presidential conventions and endorsing for the first time a presidential candidates. Public school teachers formed an important component

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on choice at the elementary and secondary school level.

of the Carter coalition at the Democratic convention, and they warmly endorsed Carter's call for the creation of a cabinet-rank Department of Education. In subsequent elections, teacher organizations remained an important ingredient in the Democratic party's primary processes, and they regularly endorsed the Democratic candidate for president. The Democratic party became the party of public education, while the Republican party became the party of choice.

This transformation in partisan politics can be seen by examining the quadrennial changes in party platforms, as displayed in Table 8. As late as 1964 neither political party mentioned choice, vouchers, or tuition tax credits. Even in 1968 Democrats ignored the topic, and Republicans only mentioned the possibility of federal assistance to non-public school children. Just how the assistance was to be provided was left unspecified. But after President Nixon's Commission on Educational Finance had endorsed tuition tax credits in early 1972, the Republican party was willing to state, rather half-heartedly, that "one way of [providing] aid appears to be . . . tax credits." In subsequent platforms Republican endorsement of tax credits became ever more unqualified so that by 1980 Republicans were roundly attacking President Carter for opposing "Republican attempts to make tuition tax credits a reality."

Meanwhile, Democrats were moving in the opposite direction. In 1976 and 1980 they endorsed "a constitutionally acceptable method of providing tax aid" to nonpublic school pupils. But in

1984 the party was only willing only to say it accepted "its commitment to constitutionally acceptable methods of support for . . . all pupils." In 1988 the party dodged the question by eliminating any references to private schools or choice and then in 1992 it attacked the Bush administration for doing nothing less than trying to "bankrupt the public school system . . . through private vouchers." Both parties had by the 1990s firmly planted their party standards on one side or another of the choice debate. For both parties, it became a litmus test issue.

The Transformation of the Choice Debate

In the late eighties, the various strands of choice politics came together, producing a new mix of issues and alliances that transformed the debate, policy proposals, and programmatic experiments. Elements of the tuition voucher, magnet school, and alternative school approaches were brought together to focus the choice discussion on the needs of minority children in central cities.

The Supreme Court's Allen (1983) and Aguilar (1985) decisions were one important catalyst. In these decisions the court legitimated tax credits and tuition vouchers that were made available to all students while casting constitutional doubt on virtually all forms of federal aid to nonpublic schools, including tuition tax credits limited to those attending nonpublic schools. Quite clearly, these court decisions called for a redesign of the federal government's compensatory education program, which had been funneling aid to sectarian schools in ways that now seemed to be almost certainly unconstitutional.[95]

The first hint of the new politics of choice appeared in an innovative piece of legislation introduced in the spring of 1986 by a moderate group of Republicans in the House of Representatives known as the Wednesday group. It proposed that the compensatory education program be redesigned so that each educationally disadvantaged, low income student be given a voucher that it could use to purchase supplementary educational services from either public or nonpublic schools. The monies could help pay for supplemental services in public schools, but it could also help pay the tuition at a private school. The following year William Bennett, the Reagan Administration's high-profile Secretary of Education, gave this approach new prominence by adopting this proposal as his own.[96] When the Bush Administration offered legislation along similar lines, it made it clear that the Republican party had chosen to emphasize choice for poor, educationally disadvantaged, inner-city minorities. The Republican party platform of 1992 heartily endorsed the "president's proposed $1,000 . . . scholarships . . . . enabling . . . children to attend the school of their choice."

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[95] Denis P. Doyle and Bruce S. Cooper, "Funding the Individual? A Chapter on the Future of Chapter 1" in Doyle and Cooper, 1988, pp. 147-65.

[96] Bruce S. Cooper, "The Uncertain Future of National Education Policy: Private Schools and the Federal Role," in Boyd and Kerchner, eds., pp. 175-79.

The new approach to choice was politically attractive to conservative Republicans. First, it avoided the constitutional problems associated with most tuition tax credit proposals. Second, it gave Republicans an issue on which it could claim to represent broad, diffuse and unrepresented interests, including those of the urban poor, while the Democratic party seemed to side with special interests. Thirdly, choice gave Republicans a badly needed program consistent with party philosophy that could be seen as addressing the problems of the inner city poor. Fourth, by focusing on choice for poor inner-city children, Republicans turned on its head the criticism that choice worked to the advantage of the well to do and educationally advantaged. Finally, the proposal highlighted the fact that upper middle class people had the financial resources to exercise choice, middle class people could choose by picking their suburb of choice, but poor people living in inner cities had very little, if any choice in their schools. When President William Clinton, following John Dewey's lead, opposed private--school choice for poor people while placing his own daughter in a prestigious private school in Washington, D. C., William Bennett was able to denounce the presidential move as "hypocritical."

Teacher organizations, public school officials, and most Democrats roundly condemned every one of these Republican efforts to promote choice.[97] Choice had been reduced to a partisan staple and a political stalemate. But as the 1980s came to a close, the new politics of choice gained steam from two unlikely sources. First, two scholars at the moderate, prestigious Brookings Institution, John Chubb and Terry Moe, undertook a sophisticated, comprehensive study of a national sample of the country's public and private schools.[98] When they found that young people learned more in private schools, they interpreted their data in political and organizational terms. Since private schools were less subject to interest group and other political pressures, they operated more autonomously, with fewer regulations, and with a less complex bureaucratic structure. Private schools also fostered closer co-operation among staff members and concentrated their attention on enhancing the academic skills of students. Their surprising endorsement of tuition vouchers captured the attention of the mass media, conservative pundits, and Republican party officials. The debate over tuition vouchers, which had slumped since the Alum Rock disaster, was suddenly reinvigorated.

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[97] Bruce S. Cooper, "The Politics of Privatization: Policy-making and Private Schools in the USA and Great Britain," in Boyd and Cibulka, pp. 245-68.

Secondly, the first tuition voucher experiment aimed at low-income, inner city residents was carried out in Milwaukee. A black Milwaukee state legislator, Polly Williams, unhappy with the City's public schools, proposed that state aid be given to any private school attended by a low-income student previously attending public school. Republican Governor Tommy Thompson endorsed the idea, and the country's first big-city voucher experiment began.

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[98] John E. Chubb and Terry M. Moe, Politics, markets and America's Schools (Washington, D. C.: Brookings Institution, 1990). Although the book was not published until 1990, a number of articles and pre-publication papers had been circulating within the policy community for several years prior to the book's publication.

As with the Alum Rock experiment, compromises with antagonistic public-school groups made it difficult for the experiment to succeed. The voucher, which could not be supplemented by the family's own resources, was only worth $2,500, less than one half the amount available to the Milwaukee public schools. Sectarian schools were declared ineligible, sharply limiting the number and quality of available private schools. Voucher students could only constitute 50 percent of the private school enrollment, making the formation of new schools difficult. The number of students that could participate in the program was limited to one percent of the total enrollment of the Milwaukee public schools. And the program's future was challenged (unsuccessfully) in the Wisconsin state courts.

Although these design features almost certainly doomed the experiment, a two-year evaluation made available in December 1992 reported that the program seemed modestly successful. The number of students enrolled increased from 341 in 1990 to 613 in 1992; the number of schools increased from seven to eleven. Although most of the students participating in the program were very low performing students from low income, minority families, their parents, who had been unhappy with the learning environment provided by the public schools, were, on the whole, quite pleased with the new choice schools. Whereas only 43 percent of the parents had given the old public school a grade of "A" or "B," 70 percent of the parents gave the new private school these higher marks.[99] Parents were particularly pleased that school teachers concentrated on instruction, school order was maintained, and the schools safe. As one seventh grader reported, the new school was much better because the teachers cared and you did not have to fight. In the child's previous public school, you "really can't avoid it," he said. "They'll think you're scared."[100]

The experiment was not an qualified success. One of the private schools closed in the first year of the program's operations. Though teachers in the private schools enjoyed their working conditions, they complained about their inadequate salaries. Initial data on student test scores coming from very small, non-random samples fluctuated significantly from one subject area to another and one school year to the next. As a consequence, the evaluation did not definitively show with quantitative data that small, secular private schools, operating with budgets half the size of the public schools, were better learning environments that those provided by the Milwaukee schools.[101] The evaluators of the program sagely observed that "if these students and families [had] remained in their prior [public] schools, they could [have] exercise[d] influence in attempting to improve those schools."[102] Only the children's parents were convinced.[103]

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[99] These data are taken from John F. Witte and Andrea B. Bailey, and Christopher A. Thorn, Second Year Report: Milwaukee Parental Choice Program, University of Wisconsin--Madison: Department of Political Science and The Robert La Follette Institute of Public Affairs, December 1992). Data on parental evaluations in Table 12a and 12b. We have weighted each year's parental evaluation equally.

[100] Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, p. 69.

If the results of the Milwaukee experiment remained open to interpretation, there was little doubt that the debate over choice took a new turn in the late 1980s. Choice advocates had focused on the Achilles heel of the public system--the segregated, bureaucratized, expensive, ineffectual central--city schools. If middle class families were fleeing this institution, what was the rationale for entrapping poor people within it? Despite the strong opposition to choice by the civil rights movement and most black political leaders, 57 percent of the minority population and 57 per cent of those living within central cities favored school vouchers in 1991 (as compared to just half of the country's overall population).[104] In a sequel to their first study, John Chubb and Terry Moe reported that private schools were only marginally more selective socially than public schools and, internally, they operated in a much more egalitarian manner.[105] Not only did the average student perform better in private schools, but there was a smaller gap between the brightest and slowest students. The new debate over choice in the 1990s was not simply whether public education were efficient but whether they were fair.[106] Choice had returned to its roots. Tom Paine's body could stop churning.

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[101] For a further discussion, see Peterson, "Are Big City Schools Holding Their Own?"

[102] Witte, p. 9.

[103] Critics argued that even parents were not convinced, because approximately 35 percent of the students did not return the subsequent year. Carnegie Endowment for the Advancement of Teaching, p. 71. This percentage, however, is virtually identical to the turnover in school enrollments within Milwaukee's public schools. Witte, pp. 19-21.

[104] Carnegie Endowment for the Advancement of Teaching, p. 63.

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[105] John Chubb and Terry Moe, "The Question of Equality in Public and Private Schools," Paper presented before the American Political Science Association, September, 1992.

[106] Clifford W. Cobb, Responsive Schools, Renewed Communities (San Francisco, California: Institute for Contemporary Studies, 1992).

Table 1.--Pupil--Teacher Ratios in Public and Private Schools, Grades Kindergarten to 12, 1955 - 1987.

Years	Pupil--Teacher Ratio	
	Public Schools	Private Schools
1955	26.9	31.7
1965	24.7	28.3
1975	20.4	19.6
1985	17.9	16.2
1987	17.6	15.5

Source: U. S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics Digest of Education Statistics 1991 (Washington, D. C.: U. S. GPO, 1991), Table 59, p. 70.

Table 2.--Estimated average per pupil expenditures of U. S. public and private schools, 1950 - 1989.

Year	Average Per Pupil Expenditures	
	Public	Private
1950	$1,617	$622
1960	2,358	799
1970	3,719	1,457
1980	4,719	2,249
1989	6,180	3,091

Sources: Private school estimates calculated from U. S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics, Digest of Education Statistics 1991 (Washington, D. C. U. S. GPO, 1991), Table 3, p.12; Table 30, p. 34; Table 36, p.40. Public school per pupil expenditures calculated in 1989 dollars from data reported in Ibid., Table 158, p. 155; table 36, p. 40.

Table 3.--Percentage of Students in Grades Kindergarten through 12 attending private schools, 1950- 1989.

Year	Percentage in Private School
1949	10.8 %
1959	12.8
1969	9.3
1979	8.5
1989	9.0

Calculated from Table 3, p. 12 of source cited in Table 2.

Table 4.--Percentage of Black Students in Desegregated Schools, 1968 - 1988.

Year	% in Predominantly Minority Schools		% in 90-100% Minority Schools	
	United States	South Only	United States	South Only
1968	76.6	80.9	64.3	77.8
1972	63.6	55.3	38.7	24.7
1976	62.4	57.1	35.9	23.0
1988	63.2	56.5	32.1	24.0

Source: Gary Orfield, "Race and the Liberal Agenda," in M. Weir, A. Orloff, and T. Skocpol, eds., The Politics of Social Policy in the United States (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 349; Gary Orfield and Franklin Monfort, Status of School Desegregation: The Next Generation (Arlington, VA: Council of Urban Boards of Education, 1992), pp. 13-15.

Table 5.--Racial Composition of Nineteen Large Central-City Schools, 1970 - 1986.

Racial Group	Year			
	1971	1977	1981	1986
White	43.5	32.9	26.6	21.9
Afro-American	42.7	47.8	49.2	48.2
Hispanic	12.1	16.3	20.1	24.4
Asian	1.6	2.6	3.8	5.1
Other	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.4
Total	100.0	99.9	99.9	100.0

Sources: U. S. Office for Civil Rights, Elementary and Secondary Schools in Selected School Districts, Enrollment and Staff by Ethnic Group, Fall 1970 (Washington: GPO, 1972); U. S. Office for Civil Rights, Directory of Elementary and Secondary School Districts, and Schools in Selected School Districts: School Year 1976-77 (Washington: GPO, 1979); Council of the Great City Schools, The Condition of Education in the Great City Schools: A Statistical Profile, 1980-1986, Table 4, pp. 8-14.

Table 6.--Ratio of per pupil expenditure in twenty-five largest cities to U. S. average, rustbelt and sunbelt, 1950-87.

(1987 dollars)

Year	U. S.	Rustbelt		Sunbelt	
		$/pupil	Ratio	$/pupil	Ratio
1950	$ 872	$1,094	1.25	$1,004	1.15
1960	1,297	1,508	1.16	1,286	0.99
1970	2,196	2,828	1.29	2,017	0.92
1982	2,969	3,397	1.14	3,093	1.04
1987	3,697	5,037	1.37	3,706	1.01

Sources: U. S. Office of Education, *Biennial Survey of Education, 1948-50* (Washington: GPO, 1953), ch. 3, table 3; *Current Expenditures in Large Public School Systems, 1959-60* (Washington: GPO, 1962); *Statistics of Local Public School Systems, 1969-70, Finance* (Washington: GPO, 1974), tables 4 and 5; U. S. Census Bureau, *Census of Governments*, 1982, vol. 4, no. 1 (Washington: GPO, 1984), table 8; National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics*, 1972, table 29, p. 32; Ibid., 1987, table 98, p. 112; Ibid., 1989, table 35, pp. 45-46; table 37, pp. 48-49; table 41, p. 55; Ibid., 1990, table 35, p. 46; National Education Association, *Estimates of School Statistics*, 1965-66, p. 10.

Table 7.--Public Opinion with Respect to Tuition Vouchers

Year	Percentage of Respondents who . . .		
	Favor Vouchers	Oppose Vouchers	Have No Opinion
1970	43	46	11
1971	38	44	18
1981	43	41	16
1983	51	38	11
1986	46	41	13
1991	50	39	11

Source: David Kirkpatrick, Choice in Schooling: A Case for Tuition Vouchers (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1990), p. 150.

Table 8.--Party positions with respect to Choice in Education, 1968 - 1992.

Year	Republican Platform	Democratic Platform
1968	"federal assistance... to non-pubic school children.... Tax credits for...higher education."	[no mention of choice issue]
1972	"One way of [providing] aid appears to be...tax credits."	"Channel financial aid by a Constitutional formula to children in non-public schools."
1976	"We favor consideration of tax credits."	"support...a constitutionally acceptable method of providing tax aid for the education of all pupils in non-segregated schools in order to insure parental freedom in choosing the best education."
1980	"support...tax credits.... dismayed that the Carter Administration...led the fight against Republican attempts to make tuition tax credits a reality."	"support...a constitutionally acceptable method of providing tax aid for...all pupils in schools which do not racially discriminate."
1984	"support President's proposal for tuition tax credits...We will convert Chapter One grants to vouchers."	"accepts its commitment to constitutionally acceptable methods of supporting...all pupils in schools which do not racially discriminate."
1988	"replace federal aid to schools with direct assistance that would give choice to low-income parents...support tuition tax credits."	[no reference to choice]

Table 4 (Continued):

	Republican Platform	Democratic Platform
1992	"help...middle-and low-income families enjoy the same choice of schools--public, private or religious--that families with more resources have. [Endorse] the president's proposed $1,000...scholarships...enabling...children to attend the school of their choice."	"oppose the Bush ad-administration's efforts to bankrupt the public school system...through private school vouchers."

Notes to Table 4.

Congressional Quarterly Almanac, 1968, pp. 989, 1037-38; *Ibid*., 1972, pp. 1738, 2160; *Ibid*., 1976, pp. 861, 907; *Ibid*., 1980, pp. 63--B, 101--B;*Ibid*., 1984, pp. 50--B; 80--B; *Ibid*., pp. 1968, 2381; *Congressional Quarterly*, July 18, 1992, p. 2108; *Ibid*., August 22, 1992, p. 2562.

CHAPTER 10

SCHOOL READINESS AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: SOME HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES

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President Bush and the nation's governors established six national education goals after the Charlottesville Education Summit in 1989. Perhaps one of the most widely known and highly esteemed goals is the first: "By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn." Under the three objectives of goal one, the issues of preschool programs, parent training and support, and child nutrition and health care were championed (National Goals Panel, 1992: 58).

If the specific time-table for having all American children ready for school is new, the stress on early childhood education, parental involvement, and improving the health of children have a longer history. Yet most educators and policy makers are only familiar with the Head Start Program and only a few of them have made any effort to place the school readiness goal within a longer historical framework. One useful perspective on the school readiness goal is to examine the changing attitudes and behavior toward early schooling in the United States. Therefore, this essay will analyze efforts to promote early childhood education in the nineteenth-century America, discuss the creation and development of the Head Start Program, and trace the concept, definition, and implementation of school readiness as a national education goal. The essay will conclude by using this broader historical perspective about the school readiness goal to raise some questions and issues that educators and policy makers perhaps still need to consider as they attempt to improve American education by expanding preschool education, enhancing parental assistance, and improving child health care by the year 2000.

I. Early Childhood Education in the Nineteenth Century

While most educators and policy makers view early childhood education as a rather recent phenomenon of the last 25 years, in fact concern about reaching and educating very young children dates back to the early nineteenth-century in the United States. By examining the rise and demise of the infant school movement in this country in the first half of the nineteenth century, we will see how quickly and abruptly enthusiasm for early childhood education has waxed and waned as a means of helping disadvantaged children and reforming society.

Some historians have argued that the concept of childhood did not exist in early America. Instead, children were perceived and treated as "miniature adults" (Demos, 1970, 1974, 1986; Modell & Goodman, 1990; Trattner, 1989; Zuckerman, 1970). More recent scholarship suggests that colonial Americans did distinguish between children and adults, but that they saw children as more intellectually and emotionally capable than many Americans do today (Axtell, 1974; Kaestle & Vinovskis, 1978; Stannard, 1975, 1977). While some young children in colonial America were taught to read, the Puritans were not especially concerned if children mastered their letters and reading at a very early age--as long as everyone eventually was able to read the Bible. Moreover, the responsibility for educating young children was entrusted to the parents and not to the schools (Moran & Vinovskis, 1992).

In the early nineteenth century there was a major change in when and how young children were educated in the United States (Jenkins, 1978; May & Vinovskis, 1978). The experiences of British reformers who set up infant schools for disadvantaged youth in factory towns and large urban areas provided useful models for American reformers in the 1820s (McCann & Young, 1982). While the reasons for creating infant schools in the United States were complex and varied, a key factor was the desire to help the poor and disadvantaged urban children and their parents. Much of the rhetoric on behalf of investing in nineteenth-century infant schools in the United States sounds quite modern as extravagant claims were made on how much money eventually would be saved by reducing welfare costs and preventing future crimes:

> For every dollar expended on Infant Schools, fifty will probably be saved to the community in the diminution of petty larcenies, and the support of paupers and convicts. This is a serious consideration: and it may be fairly doubted, whether in the boundless range of charity, for which this city is deservedly celebrated, there is any mode in which so large a harvest of safety, goodness, and virtue can be reaped from so slender a seed (Carey, 1830: 314).

As middle-class women saw the efficacy of the infant schools for disadvantaged children, many of them wanted to provide comparable institutions for their own children. The Infant School Society of the City of Boston (*Third Annual Report*, 1831: 9) observed that "[t]he infant school system was designed for the poor, and for them only was it introduced into this city; but the discovery has been made, that it is equally adapted to the rich. There is now hardly a neighborhood which has not its private infant school."

The early infant school teachers were divided on what should be taught. Some wanted to stress play activities while others emphasized teaching the three- and four-year-olds how to read. Since parents often wanted their young children to be taught reading and pressured any of the reluctant teachers, many of the infant school teachers introduced these pupils to the alphabet and rudimentary reading. The widespread popularity of infant schools was such that by 1840 it is estimated that 40 percent of all three-year-olds in Massachusetts were enrolled either in an infant school or a regular private or public school (Kaestle & Vinovskis, 1980). Early childhood education became popular not just in the larger cities, but also in the countryside as educators and parents alike sang the praises of helping young children.

The popularity of the infant schools was predicated upon the belief that children could be taught at ages three and four and that early education was beneficial to them. Many nineteenth-century reformers assumed that a child's early experiences were critical in determining their subsequent development (Brown, 1828: 4) This assumption was certainly compatible with the earlier views of young children by colonial and early nineteenth-century Americans. Yet Amariah Brigham, a prominent young Connecticut physician, published a major treatise on early childhood learning in 1833 which warned educators and parents against the infant schools. Brigham argued that over-stimulating the child's mind deprived the developing brain of the essential energy necessary for growth and thereby eventually resulted in an enfeebled mind:

> Many physicians of great experience are of the opinion, that efforts to develope [sic] the minds of young children are very frequently injurious; and from instances of disease in children which I have witnessed, I am forced to believe that the danger is indeed great, and that very often in attempting to call forth and cultivate the intellectual faculties of children before they are six or seven years of age, serious and lasting injury has bee done to both the body and the mind (Brigham, 1833:15).

Far from helping young children, Brigham believed that infant schools doomed them to insanity in later life.

Although many working-class parents continued to send their three- or four-year-olds to an infant or elementary school, educators and the middle-class supporters of infant schools now repudiated them. They accepted Brigham's arguments that early education was detrimental to a child's health and agreed also with teachers who felt that the presence of such young children was disruptive to a well-ordered classroom. Moreover, there was a growing feeling, thanks in part to the growing influence of Heinrich Pestalozzi, that young children should be nurtured in the home by the mother rather than sent to school. As a result, by the eve of the Civil War hardly any three- or four-year-old children were enrolled in school (May & Vinovskis, 1978; Kaestle & Vinovskis, 1980).

The demise of the infant schools was so complete that most historians and policy makers are not even aware that such institutions for early childhood education predated the Head Start Program by nearly 150 years. Interestingly, when kindergartens spread in the United States after the Civil War, their proponents were careful not to identify them in any way with the failed infant schools. By restricting these new institutions to children over age five and de-emphasizing the child's intellectual development, kindergartens avoided the hostility that had developed against the infant schools. But the result was that by the end of the nineteenth century, few very young children were enrolled in any schools (Winterer, 1992).

II. Development of the Head Start Program

In the first half of the twentieth century there were some efforts made to provide early education for a few children through nursery schools or day care centers, but most of these were related to other broader concerns about other social problems than just helping the individual child. As part of the Work Progress Administration (WPA) in the New Deal, the federal government sponsored some nursery schools in order to provide jobs for unemployed teachers. Moreover, under the terms of the Lanham Act during World War II, the federal government funded day care facilities for mothers working in defense-related industries. But none of these efforts left much of a lasting impact on federal policy toward early childhood education and most of them disappeared quickly once the larger crisis had subsided (Auerbach, 1988; Getis & Vinovskis, 1992; Steinfels, 1973).

President Johnson's War on Poverty, however, was to have a major and long-lasting impact on early childhood education. Influenced by the changing scholarly views of the nature of early childhood and driven by the efforts to eradicate domestic poverty, the Johnson Administration created the Head Start Program which has transformed how Americans perceive and educate preschool children.

The early twentieth-century idea that IQ was basically fixed at birth and could not be altered by the environment was challenged in the late-1950s and early-1960s by scholars such as Benjamin Bloom (1964) and J. McVicker Hunt (1961). Bloom argued that there was a "critical period" during the first five years of life and that early childhood programs could assist children from disadvantaged backgrounds. There was also a great increase in the 1960s in the proportion of child-rearing articles in the popular media that discussed the intellectual development of children (Wrigley, 1989).

The idea that children's IQs could be improved received reinforcement from several successful experimental early childhood programs in cities such as Baltimore, Nashville, New York City, and Syracuse (Zigler & Anderson, 1979). Thus, the conceptual and intellectual foundations for Project Head Start already were in place by the mid-1960s.

At the same time that ideas about the nature of childhood and IQ were changing, so too were views about poverty in the United States (Berkowitz, 1991; Kaplan & Peggy, 1986). Poverty was rediscovered and the Johnson Administration which made its elimination through education one of the major goal of the Great Society Programs (Graham, 1984; Silver & Silver, 1991). Led by the efforts of Sargent Shriver, Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO), Project Head Start was created to assist poor children overcome the disadvantages they faced when entering elementary schools (Zigler & Valentine, 1979).

Head Start began as an eight-week summer program, but was quickly converted to a full-year program. Although several of the key academic advisors suggested the gradual introduction of Head Start programs, Shriver insisted upon a large-scale effort starting in the summer of 1965. Particularly innovative and impressive was the involvement of parents in Head Start to help their young children as well as to help direct the program itself. Moreover, while the Head Start Planning Committee envisioned the program delivering a variety of services to children (including health services), the tendency of many political leaders and the media was to emphasize the more narrow, cognitive aspects of the program (Vinovskis, 1992; Zigler & Muenchow, 1992). Testifying before the U.S. House of Representatives, Shriver claimed that the Head Start Program could improve the IQ of children by 8 to 10 points (U.S. Congress, House, Committee on Education and Labor, 1966: 186).

There had been concerns among some advisors and analysts that the long-term effects of the Head Start Program might be limited, but policy makers and the public remained enthusiastic about these projects. A seminal but controversial evaluation of Head Start by the Westinghouse Learning Corporation and Ohio University seemed to substantiate those fears by finding that the initial IQ score gains were only temporary and faded quickly once those children entered the regular schools:

> Summer programs have been ineffective in producing any persisting gains in cognitive or affective development that can be detected by the tests used in grades 1, 2, and 3....Full-year programs are marginally effective in terms of producing noticeable gains in cognitive development that can be detected by the measures used in grades 1, 2, and 3, but are ineffective in promoting detectable, durable gains in affective development (Westinghouse Learning Corporation, 1969, 1: 243).

The study did go on to mention sympathetically some other non-cognitive and non-affective benefits of Head Start:

> Furthermore, Head Start has been concerned with all aspects of the child: medical, dental, nutritional, intellectual, and sociopersonal. It is also a direct example of social action to help the poor; as such, it has been a facilitator of social change in the society at large. Many positive spin-off effects can be attributed to Head Start. It has pioneered in parent education and community involvement; it has mobilized resources for the group care of young children, stimulated research work in infant and child development, and fostered the further development of teacher competence (Westinghouse Learning Corporation, 1969, 1: 255)

But the favorable statements about the program by the Westinghouse Learning Corporation generally were ignored and quickly forgotten amidst the strong negative reports of Head Start in the news media. A headline in the New York Times (April 14, 1969: 1, 36) proclaimed that "Head Start Pupils Found No Better Off Than Others."

The release of the Westinghouse Report on Head Start was met with widespread protests and criticisms from the academic community. Researchers pointed out that Head Start was not a homogenous program and that certain programs might have worked quite effectively. Marshall Smith and Joan Bissell (1970) re-analyzed the data and claimed that it demonstrated that the full-year programs of Head Start had been effective--especially in the urban African-American Head Start centers. But the authors

(Cicirelli, Evans, & Schiller, 1970) of the report also responded by rejecting the conceptual and methodological critiques of their evaluation.

Interestingly, in a retrospective glance at the controversy over the Westinghouse Report two decades later, Edward Zigler candidly admits that despite the serious methodological shortcoming of that investigation, the adverse results should not have been unexpected due to the poor and uneven quality of many of the initial programs:

> In short, there was no mystery behind the highly uneven quality of the Head Start programs in 1970. Despite the flaws in the Westinghouse report methodology, I doubt that any national impact evaluation at that time would have showed that Head Start had long-term educational benefits. Even if, as I suspected, a third of the programs were wonderful, their effects would most likely have been canceled out by an equal fraction of programs that were poorly operated (Zigler & Muenchow, 1992: 154).

Thanks to the strong political constituency for Head Start among the parents, however, the program survived despite the growing doubts about its efficacy. Yet the planned expansion of Head Start under the Nixon Administration was postponed and the program basically maintained itself at the same level of funding in real dollars for much of the 1970s and 1980s (Moynihan, 1973;

Steiner, 1976).

During the 1980s interest in Head Start revived as the proportion of mothers with young children in the labor force increased and as percentage of poor children increased (Clarke-Stewart, 1989). Early childhood education also gained an important boost when the longitudinal results from the highly visible, but controversial High/Scope study of the Perry Preschool Program in Ypsilanti, Michigan seemed to demonstrate that such programs significantly reduced juvenile delinquency and teenage pregnancy among at-risk students. As with the nineteenth-century infant schools, the initial investment in the Perry School was frequently cited as very cost-effective (Schweinhart & Weikart, 1980; Berrueta-Clement et al., 1984).

Yet the impressive results from the Perry Preschool Program also have been challenged. Critics point out that the high quality care provided by that program does not resemble that of most of the Head Start programs and therefore the results from the former cannot be used to judge the latter. Moreover, critics have questioned the adequacy of statistical design of that experiment due to the significant differences between the control and intervention groups, the lack of total random assignment, and the faulty methodology employed in the initial cost-benefit analysis (Zigler, 1987). Perhaps most disturbing is the little noticed and belated finding that the Perry Preschool Program may not be equally effective with boys and girls. Helen Barnes (1991), a researcher at the High/Scope Program who reanalyzed the longitudinal data, discovered that "[m]ost of the significant long-term outcome differences in the Perry study occur between the treatment and control girls. Although there are differences in long-term outcomes between the two male groups, in most cases they are not significant."

The debate over the long-term effectiveness of early childhood education in general and the usefulness of the Head Start Program in particular continues (Schweinhart & Gottfredson, 1990). Critics question the statistical rigor and methodological validity of the earlier evaluations of Head Start while its defenders point out that children who enroll in that program are more disadvantaged than the other poor children who have not attended (Lee, Brooks-Gunn & Schnur, 1988). Ron Haskins (1989: 278) has provided one of the more balanced summaries and assessments of the vast array of studies of the impact of early childhood education:

> 1. Both model programs and Head Start produce significant and meaningful gains in intellectual performance and socioemotional development by the end of a year of intervention.
>
> 2. For both types of programs, gains on standardized IQ and achievement tests as well as on tests of socioemotional development decline within a few years (or even less in the case of Head Start studies).
>
> 3. On categorical variables of school performance such as special education placement and grade retention, there is

very strong evidence of positive effects for the model programs and modest evidence of effects for Head Start programs.

4. On measures of life success such as teen pregnancy, delinquency, welfare participation, and employment, there is modest evidence of positive impacts for model programs but virtually no evidence for Head Start.

The idea of Head Start was predicated upon the assumption that the early years of a child's life are the most critical for their long-term growth and development. Proponents of the program used the perceived plasticity and determinative importance of early childhood to justify Head Start. But some child developmentalists have extended this same line of thinking to question Head Start by arguing that the program reaches children much too late. Burton White, for example, wrote that most of the important developments occur before the age of three:

> From all that I have learned about the education and development of young children, I have come to the conclusion that most American families get their children through the first six or eight months of life reasonably well in terms of education and development; but I believe that perhaps no more than ten percent at most manage to get their children through the eight- to thirty-six-month age periods as well educated and developed as they could and should be. Yet our studies

academic performance, especially among at-risk students;

the functional literacy of adult Americans;

the level of training necessary to guarantee a competitive workforce;

the supply of qualified teachers and up-to-date technology; and

the establishment of safe, disciplined, and drug-free schools (New York Times, October 1, 1989: 22).

The drafting of the national education goals proceeded along two parallel tracks--one by the Administration and the other by the National Governors' Association. In the Administration, Roger Porter, the White House Domestic Policy Advisor, directed the activities and drew heavily upon the staff of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) for assistance. Christopher Cross, the Assistant Secretary of OERI, in a set of briefing papers on the proposed education goals, provided four alternative ways of formulating the goal on early education:

> ALTERNATIVE GOAL ONE: By the year [2002], [all] children will be ready to begin first grade.
>
> ALTERNATIVE GOAL TWO: By the year [2002], [half] the differences among race/ethnic groups within the population with respect to their readiness with respect to their readiness to begin first grade.
>
> ALTERNATIVE GOAL THREE: By [2002], disadvantaged students

> will participate in preschool educational programs with cognitive content [at least at the same rate] as more advantaged students.
>
> ALTERNATIVE FOUR: Increase the share of parents who provide positive educational experiences at home to their preschool children (Cross, 1989).

The information in [ ] in the above quote were for purposes of illustration only. The year 2002, was often suggested because that would be when the children who were just entering kindergarten now would graduate from high school. The other commonly used and eventually adopted alternative year for the goals was 2000.

Throughout the discussions about the proposed national goals in the Administration was a concern about how they could be measured and whether it was desirable to have more than one indicator for each goal. The goal about school readiness posed a particular challenge since no adequate measurements had been developed to ascertain when a child was ready to enroll into a regular school. At the same time, specific recommendations for this goal could have immediate large-scale budgetary implications since it probably would entail an expansion of Head Start. Some suggested that a scale be developed for measuring the degree of "readiness" of children to attend school while others wanted to survey teachers on whether students were prepared to enter the first grade (Cross, 1989).

Analysts for the Education Task Force of the Governors drafted their own set of recommendations for the national goals. They also favored having a few goals, but unlike the Administration they wanted specific objectives under each of the goals and appropriate indicators to measure progress toward these objectives. One of their four general goals was that "by the time they reach school age, every American should be healthy and ready to learn." Thus, the analysts for Education Task Force of the Governors highlighted the importance of early child development and explicitly linked it to health and cognitive concerns. Moreover, they proposed nine specific indicators for school readiness and set more immediate standards for the year 1995:

> Objective: All children should be healthy.
>
> Target and indicator: Reduce the incidence of low birth weight children by one-half by 1995 and by one-half again by 2000.
>
> Target and indicator: Reduce the incidence of children who have not received recommended inoculations by 75% by 1995 and by 100% by 2000.
>
> Target and indicator: Reduce incidence of malnourished aged 0-5 children by one-half by 1995 and by one-half again by 2000.
>
> Target and indicator: Reduce to no more than 1 per 1,000 the prevalence of HIV infection among women to live born infants by the [sic] 2000.
>
> Target and indicator: Reduce the number of crack and

cocaine addicted babies by 50% by 1995 and by half again by 2000.

Objective: All children should be intellectually ready to learn.

Target and indicator: Give all four year old eligible children the opportunity to attend a year long Head Start program or its equivalent by 1995. By 2000, provide all eligible 3 year old children the same opportunity.

Target and indicator: Provide a high quality preschool program to every disadvantaged 3- and 4-year old.

Target and indicator: All 3- and 4-year old children should be screened for potential disabilities and learning disorders by 1995. Increase the percentage of children who are identified as being at-risk who are served by one-half by 1995 and to 100% by 2000.

Target and indicator: Increase the percent of preschoolers who are ready to do school work upon entering school. Indicator: Need to develop a national assessment of school readiness, and assessment tool to be administered to a sample of children for the express purpose of tracking progress on this goal (Scheppach & Cohen, 1989).

In the negotiations between the Bush Administration and the national governors during December 1989, much of the specificity about the goals in the earlier drafts of the National Governors' Association disappeared. President Bush announced the six national goals in his State of the Union speech on January 31, 1990. Goal one was simply stated as: "By the year 2000, all children in America will start school ready to learn." The text of the announcement acknowledged that no adequate assessments of school readiness existed and that it might be dangerous and ill-advised to develop a scale for determining when a child should start school:

> Assessments indicating readiness for school generally are not administered by schools. Nor do the President and the Governors recommend that such an assessment, especially one that could wrongfully be used to determine when a child should start school, be developed for purposes of measuring progress toward this goal. Other current indicators of readiness may serve as proxies, and still others need to be developed (Office of Press Secretary, 1990).

When the National Governors' Association met in February 1990, they reaffirmed the six national goals, but also expanded the specific set of objectives under each of the goals. For goal one, the three objectives were:

> All disadvantaged and disabled children will have access to high quality and developmentally appropriate preschool

> programs that help prepare children for school.
>
> Every parent in America will be a child's first teacher and devote time each day helping his or her preschool child learn; parents will have access to the training and support they need.
>
> Children will receive the nutrition and health care needed to arrive at school with healthy minds and bodies, and the number of low birthweight babies will be significantly reduced through enhanced prenatal health systems (National Governors' Association, 1990).

Establishing indicators to measure the progress made on each of the six national goals was difficult--especially in regard to goal one and school readiness. In the first annual report of the National Education Goals Panel (1991), under the heading of "what we now know", only for goal one did they state: "At present there are no direct ways to measure the nation's progress toward achieving this Goal." They went on to say that the National Goals Panel will be considering an early childhood assessment system to monitor this goal. The four variables they specified would be important for assessing a child's readiness for school were "direct indicators of the 1) knowledge, 2) social, emotional and physical well-being, 3) language usage and 4) approaches to learning of young children" (National Goals Panel, 1992: 191). To obtain this information, they proposed "student profiles of a nationally representative sample of children conducted during their first year of formal schooling. The profiles would contain four sources of information: 1) parent reports, 2) teacher reports, 3) an individually administered examination, and 4) 'portfolios' of students' performance during their first year in school" (National Education Goals Panel, 1992: 191). The specific empirical measures of school readiness reported, however, dealt with prenatal care, birthweight, routine health care, child nutrition, parent-child interactions, preschool participation and preschool quality (National Education Goals Panel, 1991: 33-38)

After creating a technical panel to work on this issue, the following year the National Education Panel acknowledged that it still had no way of measuring progress toward goal one. It did endorse a national Early Childhood Assessment System which would obtain information on a nationally representative sample of kindergartners from their teachers, parents and themselves. The National Education Goals Panel now specified that the gathering of this information would occur several times during the kindergarten year. The five critical areas of a child's growth and readiness for learning were specified as 1) physical well-being and motor development, 2) social and emotional development, 3) approaches toward learning, 4) language usage, and 5) cognition and general knowledge (National Education Goals Panel, 1992: 19). Again, the specific indicators presented about school readiness were the same limited ones presented the year before with the additions of data on continuity of health care, availability of health insurance/Medicaid, trends in nursery school enrollment, and preschool participation of children with disabilities (National Education Goals Panel, 1992: 59-72).

Given the broad and diverse definitions of a child's school readiness and the lack of any agreement on how to measure this concept, it is not surprising that different individuals and organizations employ it in a wide variety of ways. Even within the U.S. Department of Education there is little co-ordination or discussion of how goal one should be defined and implemented. For example, the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) has established an agency-wide task force to look at what we know about each of the six national goals and what research still remains to be done. That effort, however, has not been closely co-ordinated with related activities in other parts of the federal government--including working with those federal employees assigned to the National Education Goals Panel.

Individuals and organizations outside of government have also seized upon the six national education goals to further their own reform agenda. Ernest Boyer, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and a participant with the National Education Goals Panel, has written a highly influential book, Ready to Learn: A Mandate for the Nation (Boyer, 1991). Boyer interprets the school readiness goal broadly and uses it to justify the need for such diverse services such as universal health insurance, a Life Cycle curriculum, neighborhood Ready-to-Learn Centers, and full funding of an upgraded Head Start Program by 1995. Moreover, in his brief discussions of these issues Boyer tends to cite the more positive evaluations of programs such as Head Start and to ignore the more critical assessments of them. Furthermore, he relies heavily upon the results of a 1991 Carnegie Foundation study of kindergarten teachers even though only about one-third of them responded to that survey (Boyer, 1991: 161). Thus, although almost everyone agrees that we are yet to develop any effective and reliable assessments of school readiness, it does not appear to have prevented some analysts and policy makers from proposing rather ambitious and expensive programs on behalf of this goal.

Although some have expressed reservations about the implementation and measurement of goal one, few have challenged its overall validity or usefulness. One of the sharpest critics of the Bush Administration's America 2000 Program in general and of the school readiness goal in particular is columnist Phyllis Schlafly who fears further federal intrusion into education and the home:

> America 2000 has a concept of "school" that not only includes absorbing private schools into its system, but also includes expanding the public schools in order to "parent" children through their preschool years, in their after-school hours, and to provide non-school services. America 2000 wants to transform public schools into baby-sitters for pre-kindergarten kids, and into social service centers to provide meals, health care (probably including the controversial kinds), counseling and guidance....
>
> Will government agents go into the homes and dictate how

> preschool children are raised--and then snitch on parents who reject the government's "suggestions"? This sort of thing is already being experimented with under the name "Parents as Teachers," but which many people call the "Teachers as Parents" program. Americans absolutely don't want that kind of Big Brother society (Schlafly, 1992: F4).

Whatever doubts that some researchers have about the studies of the efficacy of Head Start or about measuring school readiness or whatever misgivings some conservatives voiced about federal involvement in early education, most policy makers have endorsed the program enthusiastically. President Bush sought a $600 million boast for Head Start for FY93 (27 percent increase)--the largest funding increase proposed by a president in history (Education Daily, January 22, 1992: 1). President-elect Clinton went even further and called for full funding of Head Start. As he stated in a major policy speech on education at the East Los Angeles Community College, "A country that found $500 billion to bail out the savings and loan industry can find $5 billion to full-fund Head Start" (Education Daily, May 15, 1992: 1).

IV. Conclusion

The Six National Education Goals developed by the Bush Administration and the state governors have focused public attention on the need to improve the educational system. They have also centered federal, state, and local efforts on a particular set of educational priorities and have helped to forge a broad coalition of public and private support for these objectives. While the political support for increased educational spending and innovations at the different levels still has not been as strong or as consistent as that for other programs (such as assistance to the elderly), it appears to have risen in recent years.

Having all children ready to enter school is certainly one of the best known and most popular of the six national education goals. It has succeeded in attracting considerable attention and some additional resources for early education--especially for federal funding of Head Start. This is an important achievement by itself as federal funding of Head Start in real dollars had been stagnant during the 1970s and early 1980s. Despite the broad definition of school readiness which includes concerns about children's health as well as educational reforms, however, there is little evidence to suggest that the national education goals so far have played a major role in garnering additional political support for the non-educational components of goal one.

This historical analysis of the development of the idea of school readiness also reveals that the United States has turned to early childhood education on several different occasions to correct what were perceived to be major problems in our society. The infant school movement addressed in large part the growing concern about urban crime and poverty in nineteenth-century America.

Similarly, Head Start attempted to deal with the rediscovery of poverty in the mid-1960s. Continued concern about disadvantaged children today as well as a growing fear about America's lack of competitiveness in the global economy have spurred the recent efforts on behalf of preparing all children to be ready to attend schools. While in each of these instances there was genuine interest in helping the young children themselves, all three of these movements were imbedded within broader concerns about the social and economic development of this nation.

Infant schools, Head Start, and the school readiness movement all are based upon the assumption that early childhood experiences are crucial to subsequent adult development. Proponents of these reforms believed that unless society reached the at-risk children at very young ages it would be difficult if not impossible to provide adequate remedial educational services later. Moreover, each of these movements were affected, in varying degrees, by the changing scientific and popular views of early child development. Each benefitted by the emerging belief that young children were more capable cognitively and affectively than we had previously thought, but only the infant school movement was damaged irrevocably by a counter-reaction which asserted that early intellectual stimulation could permanently impair the child's brain.

The reformers in each of these movements also shared the widespread belief in our society that education by itself can alleviate many if not most of the disadvantages individuals have acquired as a result of their economic or ethnic background. While the proponents of these changes did do not ignore entirely other necessary societal reforms, they often underestimated the extent to which structural problems in the economy or society acted as barriers to social and economic mobility. Thus, early education often was portrayed as a panacea for solving problems which might have been equally or better addressed in other arenas.

While almost all of the attention was devoted to preparing disadvantaged children for the regular schools, very little effort was made to change the regular schools to accommodate those children. Nineteenth-century public school teachers and administrators frequently complained about the infant schools and often joined forces with others to eventually eliminate three- and four-year-olds from the public schools. Despite early warnings that the initial cognitive gains of Head Start faded for students when they entered the elementary grades, surprisingly little effort was made to rethink and restructure the existing public schools. Although the Follow-Through Program was created in 1967 for that purpose, it has never enjoyed the visibility or support that one might have expected. Similarly, although the early drafts of goal one by the staff of the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) in the summer of 1989 called for having all children ready for school and for having all schools ready for children, the latter part of this message was discussed and dropped in subsequent drafts in other parts of the U.S. Department of Education. Unfortunately, many public schools and teachers still have not succeeded in adapting their curriculum or teaching practices to the special needs of disadvantaged students.

After more than twenty-five years of experience with Head Start and a federal expenditure of over $21 billion to serve 12 million children, we still are not certain of what is the actual impact of that program on the life course of disadvantaged children. Moreover, given the diversity of Head Start programs, we also do not know which Head Start models are best suited for children in different settings. Nevertheless, most policy makers and the public are convinced of the efficacy of Head Start--though some call for improving the overall quality of the program by reducing class sizes and attracting better trained teachers by substantially increasing their salaries. Finally, very little if any effort has been made to consider whether alternative expenditures on children, such as more individualized tutoring in the elementary grades, might be a more effective way of helping at-risk students.

Thus, ensuring that all children are ready for school is a laudable goal and one that has ample historical precedents in this country. But the uncertainty about the actual meanings of that goal and of the best ways of implementing it continue to present a serious challenge to policy makers and the public. Yet perhaps the pointed reminder to all of us about the importance of providing a world-class education for all of our young children will help us in overcoming the often all-too visible short-term difficulties and inefficiencies involved in having all children ready to learn when they enter school.

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CHAPTER 11

DEAD END OR DETOUR?
SCHOOL LEAVING IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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In recent decades educators and policymakers have come to view dropping out of high school as a social problem of significant proportions. Dropouts are widely believed to have bleaker job prospects than graduates and to be more likely candidates for unemployment and casual employment. Inasmuch as Hispanics and blacks have been more likely than others to drop out of high school, the alleged economic drain from failure to complete high school has blended in the minds of policymakers with the image of American society as fractured along ethnic and racial lines. In response to these concerns, the National Education Goals Report targets a high school completion rate of at least 90 percent by the year 2000.

The fact that the reduction of dropouts has become one of the six national educational goals underscores the intense interest that now surrounds the subject. Prior to the 1960s educators devoted much more attention to increasing the average educational attainment (or years in school) of the American population than to the prevention of dropping out. Although these two objectives seem to be merely different sides of the same coin, each leads to a different emphasis. Requiring publicity and programs that were aimed at the middle of the population, the pursuit of the goal of increasing educational attainment produced exponential gains. Inasmuch as the great majority of young people now complete high school, making the prevention of dropping out a major national goal sends educators on a kind of perimeter search-and-destroy mission that by definition will yield small numerical inceases.

Yet many of the arguments that now propel the campaign against dropouts were developed early in the twentieth century precisely to encourage higher average attainment. An apparent consensus among educational policymakers about the value of universal secondary education took shape before 1920, but this consensus was and remains fragile. This fragility has resulted from several factors. First, there has long been a difference in emphasis between educational policymakers, the kind of people who serve on national commissions, and local school officials. Each has favored "democracy" in education, but with subtly different interpretations of its meaning. During the years between the two world wars and into the 1950s, local officials thought of a democratic high school as one which drew students from all the social classes of a locality, but not necessarily as one that reproduced the local class (or racial) distribution in any literal way. As long as some working-class teenagers attended and eagerly participated in the school's curricular and extracurricular activities, these officials were satisfied that their school was democratic. These same officials took it for granted that economic necessity would force some teenagers to leave school and would prevent others, especially farm children, from entering. But they do not appear to have been deeply troubled by this, partly because there was nothing they could do about it and partly because they wanted no part of unwilling or unmotivated students whose reluctant attendance would mar the image of whole-hearted participation that they were trying to convey.

In contrast, national policymakers were more likely to doubt that economic necessity forced teenagers out of school; in their view, an appropriate curriculum, specifically one that provided vocational preparation, would induce most working-class teenagers to persist in high school. But even these policymakers doubted the value of inducing truly unmotivated students to persist. These doubts continued into the 1950s, when new attitudes toward unmotivated students began to emerge. Increasingly, educators and psychologists argued that high schools could motivate the unwilling.

Although this emphasis on motivating students continues to influence policy, during the last half-century it has had to compete with an alternative approach to school withdrawal, which acknowledges that some students will drop out but which makes provisions for their later re-entry into the educational system. The key institutional buttresses of this approach have been the General Education Development tests (GED) and the notion of junior (later community) colleges as institutions of continuing education.

Measurements. Concern over dropouts has intensified despite the steadily rising rate of high-school completion over the last half century. Several measures testify to the rising educational attainment of the population and the increasing frequency of school completion. In 1940 less than one-third of the civilian labor force aged 14 to 64 had completed high school, compared to over two-thirds by 1972 (Deutermann, 1972, 216). In 1870 only two of every

100 persons aged 17 graduated from high school; a century later 76 of every 100 graduated (National Center for Education Statistics, 1979, 64-65) In 1940 more than 60 percent of all persons aged 25 to 29 had not completed high school; by 1980 only 16 percent had failed to complete high school (Rumberger, 1987, 101). Between 1910 and 1986 the median number of years of schooling completed by persons aged 25 or over rose from 8.1 to 12.7. Most of this change was accomplished between 1940 and 1970 (National Center for Education Statistics, 1988, 15). There has occurred, in addition, a significant convergence between the median number of years of schooling completed by whites and blacks (National Center for Education Statistics, 1988, 15).[1]

Although the educational attainment of the population has risen, the confluence of higher dropout rates among some minorities, especially Hispanics, and the increasing proportion of minority students in public high schools has spurred concern among policymakers, which, in turn, has focused research on measuring the dropout rate. Unfortunately, no consensus exists on either the definition of dropping out or on the best way to measure the rate of dropping out. States vary widely in their definitions of dropping out. One state counts only school leavers below the compulsory school age; another includes only those who leave above the compulsory age. States have different ways of classifying students who are shifted from high schools to prisons or mental institutions (Clements, 1990, 34-6).[2] Dropout rates as varying as 2 percent and over 30 percent have been publicized (Kominski, 1990, 303).

Gradually, however, the dropout picture is coming into clearer focus. The National Center for Education Statistics currently employs three measures of the extent of dropping out. First, the event dropout rate compares the number of students who drop out within a twelve-month period to the number at the start of the period. Second, the cohort dropout rate measures the experiences of a single group (or cohort) over a period of time by comparing the number of students who have left school prior to completion to the number present in the group at the start of the period in question. Third, the status dropout rate, a rough composite of the event rates summed over several years, measures the proportion of individuals in a specified age range, for example 16 to 24, who are dropouts by comparing the number of 16- to 24-year-olds who have not completed high school and who are not still enrolled to the total populations of 16- to 24-year-olds (NCES, 1992, 37-38). Although each measure yields a different result, the three measures are ultimately compatible. Further, regression analysis has made it possible to establish trends for the first and third measures, and these trends point in a similar direction. Both event and status dropout rates have declined since the late 1970s, and this decline has included black as well as white students (NCES, 1992, 7, 8, 21).[3]

None of these measures of failure to complete high school is without drawbacks, which have been fully acknowledged by researchers (Rumberger, 1987, 103-07; Kominksi, 1990, 305).[4]

Collectively and individually, however, they point to both long-term and short-term increases in school completion and decreases in dropout rates. We are thus confronted with a paradox: concern with the "problem" of failure to complete school has risen even as the scope of the problem has contracted. Public concern over dropouts rose after World War II and, at least measured by the number of articles on the subject by researchers and policymakers, has intensified in the last two decades.

One might plausibly conclude from declining rates of dropping out that the current concern over failure to complete high school is exaggerated. From one perspective, this conclusion seems fair. A modest, even if still significant, number of students, around 348,000, dropped out of grades 10-12 in 1991 (NCES, 1992, 35). From a different perspective, however, the persistence of dropping out gives legitimate cause for concern. First, although rates of dropping out for blacks have declined, they remain higher than those for whites, and rates for Hispanics, which consistently have been much higher than those for whites, show no trend toward decline. In addition, although an annual number of 348,000 dropouts is perhaps not alarming in itself, the cumulative effect of such annual numbers is disturbing. In 1991 nearly four million persons aged 16 to 24 (12.5 percent of the age group) did not have high school diplomas and were not enrolled in school (NCES, 1992, 35). In sum, the concern of policymakers with dropouts, even at a time of rising rates of school completion, is by no means groundless. As high school completion has become the norm, the fear has heightened that dropouts will form an ever more threatening social group, disaffiliated not only from school but from society.

This fear of social disaffiliation (or alienation) has roots in the American notion of schooling as a cultural bond, a way to forge shared values. For over a century this ideal has coexisted with that of schooling as a source of economic opportunity, and although the two ideals are compatible in theory, they have often led in practice to different emphases in practice.

Roots. The first flurry of interest in compulsory schooling rose as a byproduct of the mid-nineteenth century movement for public, or "common," school reform. In those days reformers were far more interested in increasing school attendance than in raising the average level of educational attainment. They feared that children who worked at early ages in factories would grow up in ignorance. They translated this simple polarity between an educated and an ignorant work force into demands that child laborers attend school for some part of the year. As early as 1836 Massachusetts required children employed in factories to attend school for twelve weeks a year. The first general compulsory attendance law in the United States, passed in Massachusetts in 1852, required children between 8 and 14 to attend public school for at least twelve weeks a year, six of which were to be consecutive (Ensign, 1921, 48-49). Subsequent legislation in Massachusetts and contemporary laws in other industrializing states had a similar ring. Without providing effective mechanisms of enforcement, legislatures consistently targeted labor in manufacturing and mercantile establishments that was so prolonged on a daily basis as to interfere with rudimentary schooling. Beyond that, the state had little interest in compelling attendance. Mid-nineteenth-century laws were far more likely to specify the minimum age at which a child could be employed in a manufacturing or mercantile establishment (usually 10 or 12) than to extend the maximum age of schooling. When Massachusetts rewrote its compulsory school law in 1873, its simultaneously increased the number of weeks of schooling required annually while reducing (from 14 to 12) the upper age limit (Ensign, 1921, 61).[5]

Odd as it may appear a century later, this lowering of the upper age limit was consistent with the importance that mid-nineteenth-century educators attached to order and regularity. Horace Mann was one among several nineteenth-century school reformers to view teenagers as a potentially disruptive influence in the classroom. Neither reformers nor school principals were unhappy when these "large boys" of 15 or 16 left school for work, for their goal was to effect more systematic schooling for those from 8 to 13 (Kaestle and Vinovskis, 1980, 36). Reformers, it is true, did promote public high schools for teenagers, but without any expectation that most teenagers would attend these institutions. In urban areas, where support for school reform was strongest, industrial and commercial development after 1820 increased the opportunity costs of schooling by providing teenagers with the prospect of earning wages, and thus worked against high school attendance (Kaestle and Vinovskis, 1980, 74-75).

Between 1890 and 1920 attitudes toward the schooling of teenagers underwent a sea change. To a far greater degree than in the mid-nineteenth century educators began to emphasize the importance of educational attainment or school persistence. Where their predecessors had bluntly contrasted the prospects of educated and ignorant workers, educators now began to assemble evidence to demonstrate that those who persisted in school until 16 would earn more over the long run than school leavers before that age. When in 1917 A. Caswell Ellis, a professor of education at the University of Texas, summarized various studies purporting to show the superior performance in the job market of those with more years of education, his bibliography included over one hundred titles, nearly all of which had been published since 1905 (Ellis, 1917, 46-52).[6]

The movement to prolong schooling into the teens encountered considerable resistance. Neither in theory nor practice had nineteenth-century high schools been democratic institutions, and until the late nineteenth century the legality of spending public funds on such institutions was challenged.[7] The very term "high" school had exclusive connotations. Colleges, academies, and high schools alike long had connoted higher education, which in nineteenth-century parlance contrasted with "common" schools or the "common branches" of learning, the subjects that everyone studied. By the late nineteenth century educators were drawing sharper lines between secondary and higher education than had been the case in mid-century, but the nation contained only a quarter of a million high school students in 1890, the majority of whom were female. Nineteenth-century success mythology had celebrated the plucky lad who left school after a rudimentary education and who rose up the ladder by his own efforts, and this view by no means evaporated after 1900.

All of this made it difficult to imagine high schools as institutions of mass education, but this is exactly what an influential body of educators began to do in the early 1900s. Published in 1918, authored by the National Education Association's Committee on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, and mainly written by Clarence Kingsley, the famed Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education recommended compulsory schooling until age 18 and insisted that high-school education had to become a "common" experience of all American youth. Although not indifferent to the economic value of added schooling, the Cardinal Principles essentially applied the reasoning of the mid-nineteenth century school reformers to secondary education: universal secondary schooling would act as a social bond among different classes. While advocating a diverse curriculum to accommodate the varied needs of students, the Cardinal Principles consistently emphasized the value of secondary education in creating a uniform national culture. The sundry objectives of education established by the report--health, command of fundamental processes, worthy home-membership, vocation, citizenship, worthy use of leisure, and ethical character--were not conceived as independent bases for separate types of secondary schools. Rather, all students would attend comprehensive high schools and share some if not all classes. No exception was made for those whose family circumstances or individual proclivities pushed them into jobs before the age of 18; they too would attend, if only part-time, and, to build "social solidarity," "share in the use of the assembly hall, gymnasium, and other equipment provided for all" (Committee on the Reorganization of Secondary Education, 1918, p. 31).

Educators who favored the prolongation of schooling drew comfort from the quantum leaps in secondary school enrollments between 1890 and 1930. The proportion of 17-year-olds to graduate from full-time high schools rose from 3.5 percent in 1890 to 25 percent by 1926. This transformation does not appear to have been driven directly by legal changes. Between 1900 and 1918 a number of states advanced the upper limit of compulsory schooling; by the end of World War I twenty-eight states had upper limits beyond 14 (usually 16). But nearly all of these allowed children to leave at 14 (in some cases earlier) if they secured work permits (Krug, 1964, 170, note 2), and no state required attendance at high school. Laws aimed less at prolonging schooling than at preventing idleness and premature entry into certain occupations. Indirectly, however, the requirement that teenagers secure work permits before leaving school was making the employment of teenagers increasingly problematic.

On balance, however, legislation played only a minor role in the removal of youth from the labor market. The erosion of demand for unskilled labor played a far more fundamental role. Of the various factors that contributed to this erosion, two stand out. First, the proportion of the population engaged in farming (where demand for child labor had always been keen) declined. In 1880 51 percent of the labor force consisted of farmers and farm laborers, but by 1920 only 28 percent. Second, the introduction of machinery powered by electricity reduced the demand for unskilled labor. At the same time, the flood of immigrants in the early 1900s increased the supply of unskilled labor. To the extent that occupations still required unskilled workers, employers were more likely to employ adult immigrants than young people (Osterman, 1980, 54-57).

The same advances in industrialization that reduced demand for unskilled labor contributed to the growth of office work, which in turn encouraged first middle-class and then working-class parents to prolong their children's education (DeVault, 1990, 9-23, 102-03). The economist Paul Douglas estimated that the ratio of clerical workers to all workers in American manufacturing dropped from one in thirteen in the decade 1890-99 to one in seven by 1924. Inasmuch as the work of clerks and bookkeepers traditionally had been associated with middle-class status, the growth of office work appeared to create new opportunities for entry into middle-class work. Further, both the general and commercial curricula of high schools were highly compatible with preparation for office work, far more compatible, indeed, than were school shop classes with mechanical labor (Licht, 1991, 71-72, 94-96).[8] In sum, high school attendance increasingly seemed the ideal way to prepare for types of labor that combined cleanliness, safety, and respectability. The value of secondary education impressed working-class as well as middle-class parents. As Douglas noted, by the 1920s the manual worker, with more dollars in his Saturday night envelope, had concluded that the best way to advance his own children into the middle class was to prolong their education into high school (Douglas, 1926, 720-21).

Many of the values that now permeate the debate over dropouts were in place by 1920: the ideal of universal high school attendance as desirable on both social and economic grounds; high school completion as a necessary objective; and the need for a curriculum that would accommodate a socially diverse population of students. In 1922 the prominent progressive educator George S. Counts asserted that "in theory we are apparently rather definitely committed to the idea" of universal secondary education, and that this ideal "possibly" included high school completion (Counts, 1922, 150, 156). From Counts's perspective, practice merely had to catch up with theory, a likely development in his view. Although he recognized that the children of laborers and black teenagers were grossly underrepresented in the high schools of his day, he contended that modern industry afforded so little opportunity for adolescents that, with the encouragement of educators, universal secondary education would become the norm (Counts, 1922, 155).

Yet for many contemporaries of Counts universal secondary attendance was undesirable even in theory. Some of these dissenters resisted the introduction of any sort of vocational courses on the principle that high schools had to remain academic and selective institutions. By the 1920s this old-fashioned elitism was on the decline, but the same cannot be said for another variety of dissent, which asserted the superiority of part-time attendance. For Clarence Kingsley, the principal author of the Cardinal Principles, and for most mainstream progressives, part-time students were a necessary evil, but for an influential body of educators they were a positive good. Charles Prosser and David Snedden, who are usually classified as "efficiency" educators, and their many allies in the influential National Society for the Promotion of Industrial Education (NSPIE) are usually associated with the notion that vocational education should take place in separate vocational schools rather than in comprehensive high schools. The Cardinal Principles should be read as a response to this insistence, but what Prosser and Snedden actually favored was a rooting of job training in factory or corporation schools, with part-time continuation schools to complete general education. In their eyes systematic vocational training in the work place would always be more "real" than the make-believe vocational courses of comprehensive schools. Bullied into full-time attendance in high schools, many teenagers would always display lethargy and indifference, but given the opportunity to test themselves in the work place and to supplement their work experience with part-time schooling, these same youth would respond eagerly.

Lest we dismiss the efficiency educators as fringe eccentrics, we should remember that Prosser was the effective author of the Smith-Hughes Act of 1917, which stipulated that one-third of federal appropriations had to be reserved for separate continuation schools. In advancing their program, the efficiency educators not only drew on the experience of re-training workers for war industries during World War I but on old-fashioned ideals about the value of work in building character. Where John Dewey, Kingsley, and Counts saw the industrial economy as a dead end for teenagers, for Prosser the world of work was still wonderful, a cornucopia of opportunity for the "plucky lad" (Prosser and Allen, 1925, 53; O'Leary and Prosser, 1915, 17).

Ideals about the value of work, supplemented by schooling, also persisted in the nether world of proprietary schools, especially correspondence schools. These institutions experienced extraordinary growth between 1890 and 1930; in 1925 proprietary correspondence schools enrolled between 1.75 and 2 million new students, more than the number of resident students in all colleges and universities combined (Noffsinger, 1926, 15-16). Although correspondence schools and high schools did not compete for the same clients (correspondence students typically were in their mid-20s), the remarkable growth of correspondence schools suggests that, at least in the public's mind, systematic education acquired after entry into work remained an alternative to persistence in sequential schooling through high school.

Correspondence schools, and proprietary schools in general, did not offer recognized academic credentials, but the value of credentials, as opposed to skills acquired through education, was not as clearly perceived in the 1920s as now. It was plausible, in other words, for someone to conclude that the times required more education, but not necessarily a diploma from high school, and that education, as opposed to a diploma, could be secured through various means besides high school. Significantly, when A. Caswell Ellis tried to demonstrate the "money value" of prolonged schooling in 1917, only nine of the more than one hundred items in his bibliography directly addressed the value of high schools. Ellis spent considerable effort on demonstrating that technical and trade schools (many of them private) also paid dividends, and he certainly preferred such formal institutions to shop training (Ellis, 1917, 20-41). Ellis's study can be read as a defense of schooling over on-the-job education, but not as a brief for the comprehensive high school. In addition, his very stress on the importance of increments of schooling should be interpreted as evidence of widespread public skepticism about the value of formal schooling as such.

The Interwar Years. Proprietary-school enrollments were levelling off by the late 1920s and declined in the Depression. The continuation schools that the framers of the Smith-Hughes Act had favored had never enjoyed a robust growth, and the industrial-education classes in separate vocational schools, which had also been funded by Smith-Hughes and whose enrollments had more than tripled in the 1920s, recorded negligible enrollment gains in the 1930s. In general, public educators succeeded in fighting off separate boards of control, including the Federal Board for

Vocational Education established by Smith-Hughes, and in incorporating vocational education within comprehensive high schools. These schools accounted for most of the remarkable growth of secondary-school enrollments in the Depression decade, which saw a rise in the proportion of 17-year-olds to graduate from high school from 29.0 percent in 1929-30 to 50.8 percent in 1939-40 (Tyack, 1974, 190; National Center for Education Statistics, 1988, 190).

All of these developments brought the ideal that Counts had described in 1922 closer to achievement, but it is possible to detect in the 1920s and 1930s some subtle reservations about the ideal, even among educators ostensibly committed to democratic secondary education. For many educators, "universal" did not quite mean "everyone." When Counts said universal, he certainly meant that. Everyone except the "feeble-minded" should attend and probably should complete high school. But in the nineteenth century common school reformers also had called for the common schooling of everyone and then made so few provisions for enforcing compulsory school laws that we are left wondering about the depths of their commitment (Tyack, 1976). In fact, during the nineteenth century local school officials were lukewarm about compulsory schooling, which, if taken seriously, threatened to burden the schools with chronic troublemakers; they supported evening schools partly to keep rough factory children out of day schools (Ensign, 1921, 63). A similar ambivalence permeated conceptions of universal secondary schooling in the 1920s and 1930s. Even those who in principle subscribed to universality indulged in unspoken but ingrained assumptions about the necessary limits of secondary education, and they would continue to do so until after World War II.

It was on the local level that this ambivalence was especially pronounced during the interwar years. While not overtly dissenting from the ideal of democratic secondary education, school boards and principals seem to have equated democracy with the whole-hearted participation of the community in the high school, not with the literal enrollment of all teenagers. The most striking feature of "Middletown's" high school, described by Robert and Helen Lynd at the end of the 1920s, was its stress on participation in extracurricular activities, especially sports. Middletown's Central High School had become a popular institution between 1890 and 1924, not only because a vastly larger proportion of its young people attended (the city's population had increased three and a half times while its high school enrollment had risen elevenfold and graduates nineteenfold) but also because the high school now had become the focal point of the city's boosters. Friday night was basketball night in Middletown, a time when the whole community seemed to be caught up in the "Bearcat spirit." Where in the 1890s high school students had mingled with adults in attending public lectures, by the 1920s adults crowded into the gymnasium to watch teenagers play (Lynd and Lynd, 1929, 183-85, 211-22).

In Middletown, the sport and social clubs of the high school roughly replicated the adult social organizations that had proliferated since the 1890s. Middletown had become a city of joiners, bursting with the noisy boosterism and self-congragulatory spirit that Sinclair Lewis had satirized in Babbitt (1922). Generously treated by annual appropriations, Central High School had become a source of community pride. As a community institution, it seemed democratic. But not everyone belonged to the community. Not only were the city's innumerable social organizations graded by prestige, but the pecking order among its clubs was reproduced in the high school. Although the Lynds were not primarily concerned with school leavers, they paid more attention to them than did local school officials and observed the way in which social class conditioned high school attendance. By the 1920s working-class Middletowners were evidencing "great pressure toward education" in their desire "to escape to better things" (Lynd and Lynd, 1929, 80). But many working-class children dropped out, partly to earn money but also to escape the invidious distinctions of Central High School's social climate (Lynd and Lynd, 1929, 185-87).

Impressed by the growth and wealth of the high school, Middletown's school officials took little notice of non-attenders. The same was true of the school officials of "Elmtown," the cornbelt community of 6,500 that August B. Hollingshead studied on the eve of American entry into World War II. Elmtown's administrators were as persuaded as those of Middletown that their school democratically reflected the community, and much like Middletowners they defined the community as the participating population. Robert Hampel has described the high school before 1960 as the "last little citadel," a revealing metaphor that well describes the attitudes of school administrators in the 1920s and 1930s (Hampel, 1986). As jewels of localities, high schools were to incarnate the community's image of its better self. Taking pride in their high school, which they envisioned as a bastion of "wholesome" values, Elmtown's school officials saw what they wanted to see: boys and girls eagerly coming to high school each day. What they did not see was the local lower- and under-classes, Hollingshead's classes IV and V, the people who lived "across the canal."[9] According to Hollingshead, they knew nothing about these people. When he drove with the superintendent of schools across the canal to interrogate the father of a pair of school vandals and chronic truants, the superintendent commented: "I've never been down here before. I did not know this area existed" (Hollingshead, 1949, 354).

This combination of ignorance and indifference to the local underclass permeated officials' understanding of school leavers. They confidently told Hollingshead that he would find only "a few kids" under 16 who were out of school and not at work, and when they minimized the out-of-school population of teenagers, school administrators simply did not count farm youth, especially the Norwegians. In effect, they told Hollingshead that the Norwegians did not count as part of the eligible high school population, since they were all farmers and farmers did not believe in education beyond the eighth grade (Hollingshead, 1949, 329).

Hollingshead's own investigation revealed a more complex picture. Most school leavers were urban, not rural, and their work experience was intermittent. Not infrequently, they worked part-time while attending high school and then dropped out the moment they secured a full-time job. But even full-time work proved transient, partly because local employers took a dim view of dropouts and would employ them only in low-level work. In their mid- and late-teens school leavers skipped from job to job, always in search of higher wages. Significantly, Hollingshead was sure that nothing would change this. School leavers, nearly all from classes IV and V, entered the labor force with totally unrealistic expectations but the impulse that drove them to work was ineradicable, not economic necessity as such but their association of ready cash with the adult status they craved. High school could never provide this status, for high-school students by definition were dependent and lower-class youth wanted independence (Hollingshead, 1949, chaps. 13-14).

Hollingshead described school leavers as engaged in a process of adjustment, not so much to work but to their position in the class structure. Once they had reached the age of 18, their work experience became steadier (this was especially true of class IV youth) and they began to settle down. "Folk culture," Hollingshead found, comprehended their drifting between their mid- and late-teens as an inevitable "revolt of youth," but the revolt was not really threatening (Hollingshead, 1949, 369). Rather, it was just a phase through which lower-class youths passed as they adjusted to their status as lower-class adults. Because dropping out was rooted in family psychology as much as in family economy, there was nothing that could be done to reverse it. As an urban school superintendent recollected in the 1950s, during the Depression a teenager who dropped out of high school was through with school, and the school was through with him (Educational Policies Commission, 1952, 190).

Policy Statements in the Depression and World War II. Although Hollingshead presented a more sophisticated analysis, school administrators in Elmtown voiced what might be termed the traditional view of dropouts: the requirements of family economies would always induce some children to leave school for work. Such decisions might be ill-advised, but there was little that officials could do to reverse them. The same officials complacently assumed that school leavers, especially those who persisted in school till age sixteen, would find work. But developments in the 1930s were effectively closing off teenagers' avenues of entry into the labor force. The prolongation of education, which in the early 1900s was defended as a way to increase the long-term earning power of young people, drew support from a range of policymakers in the 1930s as a way to reduce unemployment by removing young people from competition for jobs. Although implicit in earlier discussions of prolonging education, this objective became explicit in the 1930s (Osterman, 1980, 69-70). Few justified high schools merely as custodial institutions, but trade union officials, government administrators, and school superintendents in the 1930s agreed on the value of enclosing youth apart from the labor market.

By the late 1930s studies were publicizing the relationship between prolonging education and reducing unemployment. One motif that ran through these studies was that the "youth problem," defined as the demoralization that resulted from unemployment and underemployment among those aged 16 to 24, would become a political problem in the absence of concerted attempts to address it. In The Lost Generation, Maxine Davis warned that boys and girls forced to enlist in "the reserve armies of industry," would become the followers in the "armies of brown and black shirts" (Davis, 1936, 187). In Youth Tell Their Story, a survey of out-of-school youth in Maryland, Howard M. Bell reported not only found widespread unemployment among young people aged 16 to 21 but also signs of demoralization. In Maryland, five times as many young people wanted to work in the professions as were employed in them. Schools had equipped young people with unrealistic expectations and few skills (Bell, 1938, 132). Even worse, the more able students experienced the greatest despondency, for they were the most ambitious. Bell thought it significant that the recruits for radical youth movements in Europe during the preceding two decades had been drawn from the ranks of unemployed university graduates, and he feared a similar development among despondent high school leavers in America (Bell, 1940, 22).

The wide publicity accorded the books by Davis and Bell underscore the recurrent fear of "idle" youth. The early twentieth-century reformers who proclaimed the ideal of universal secondary education had reflected this fear by requiring school leavers under the age of 16 to secure work permits. To a degree, such New Deal agencies as the National Youth Administration (NYA) and Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) had come into existence to serve the population of out-of-school and out-of-work youth. But Bell's material and the American Youth Commission's report of 1942, Youth and Their Future, pointed to their shortcomings. With its sundry training camps, the CCC was extremely expensive to operate. The NYA avoided this problem by allowing youth to live at home, but it could provide little more than part-time work on public projects (American Youth Commission, 1942, 28-41). Inclined to view federal programs as mere stopgaps, articulate educators turned to the idea of prolonging schooling until at least age 18, but they did so initially without great expectations. Along with most social analysts of the 1930s, Bell did not expect a future expansion of the professions or white-collar work, and he delineated a role for schools in promoting "occupational adjustment," which meant guiding youth toward "realistic" (lower) expectations (Bell, 1938, 98).

In contrast, by the end of the 1930s the educational policymakers who gathered on the Educational Policies Commission (jointly appointed by the National Education Association and the American Association of School Administrators) were advancing more optimistic forecasts of the future of work by suggesting that technological advances would require a more highly-trained labor force. In its influential report Education and Economic Well-Being in American Democracy, this commission called for raising the minimum amount of formal schooling to ten years and the average to fourteen years (Educational Policies Commission, 1940, 128-132). Yet in comparison with later documents, Education and Economic Well-Being was remarkably restrained in its assessment of the relation between schooling and earnings. While acknowledging evidence akin to that assembled by A. Caswell Ellis in 1917, evidence that purported to show a direct relationship between increments of schooling and wages, the authors warned that the jury was still out. Schooling would raise individual income only when a demand for skilled workers existed in a locale, and it would increase national wealth only to the extent to which it overcame "artificial" barriers to school persistence, primarily those based on class and race (Educational Policies Commission, 1940, 119-121). This left individual ability and motivation as legitimate barriers to school persistence, and it led the Commission to conclude that "the economic reasons for providing education have become largely social." That is, adequate provision for schooling would do less to raise individual or national wealth than to afford "a more equitable distribution of earned income" and "the total social income" (Educational Policies Commission, 1940, 121).

In sum, on the eve of American entry into World War II even progressive justifications of prolonging education were still hedged by reservations. One such reservation was the continuing belief that school leavers were forced out by economic necessity. What primarily mattered to the authors of Education and Economic Well-Being was that all students with the "capacity and willingness" to absorb more education, regardless of social class or race, be enabled to stay in school for at least ten years, even if income supplements were required to achieve this goal. The fact that the Commission specified its target as a number of school years completed rather than attainment of a specific age is also significant; its recommendation was compatible with an earlier proposal (which it cited) that students attend full-time until 16 and then half-time until 20 or 21 (Educational Policies Commission, 1940, 131). In addition, Education and Economic Well-Being insisted that only qualified youth, those with appropriate motivation and intelligence, persist beyond the ten-year minimum. "The real source of the difficulty," the Commission contended, "is that our educational opportunities are not closely enough correlated with individual abilities and social needs" (Educational Policies Commission, 1940, 158).

For all its hedging, the Commission did call for the advancement of the average level of schooling to fourteen years, in other words two years beyond conventional high school. In retrospect, it is remarkable that this proposal was put forward, for the Depression (which was still on when the Commission's report was approved for publication in 1939) had flattened college enrollments and had led to widespread unemployment of college graduates. But the Commission drew attention to rising enrollments in junior colleges, an institution that would come to play a prominent role in all subsequent thinking about the prolongation of education.

Appearing first as a glimmer on the horizon at the end of the nineteenth century and widely trumpeted by a noisy minority of educators in the 1920s and 1930s, the junior college began to appeal to educators as a godsend by the late 1930s. Although still on the periphery of "postsecondary" education--most were housed in high schools and concentrated in a few states--junior colleges offered the promise of an upward extension of high school for two years, with the focus now primarily vocational. In this conception, civic socialization and basic education could be left to primary and secondary schools, while junior colleges and publicly funded local technical institutes addressed the need for "occupational adjustment."

This division of responsibility had the merit of preserving high schools as the common meeting grounds for different classes, an ideal articulated by the Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education and long threatened by the more strident advocates of vocational education and part-time schools. In addition, in order to qualify for federal funds under the George-Deen Act of 1936, which opened commercial or "distributive" education to Smith-Hughes appropriations, junior colleges had to specify that their vocational courses were "less than college grade," a phrase that federal education officials interpreted to include courses open to non-graduates of high schools. Thus junior colleges seemed ideally suited to school leavers who chose to return to complete their education. This kind of continuing education proved far more appealing to American educators than had the continuation schools favored by the Smith-Hughes Act, which had been based on daily or weekly alternations between job and school. Most educators long had recognized that the United States lacked the tradition of apprenticeship than had enabled such schools to thrive in Germany. The idea of returning to school to reassess goals and to secure additional training after a few years at work seemed more suited to American conditions and ideals. In 1945 George Zook, former president of the University of Akron and president of the American Council on Education, drafted the report Higher Education for American Democracy, which baptized junior colleges as the vanguard of democratization, urged that they serve their entire communities (soon they would be called community colleges), emphasized their role in continuing education, and proposed making available without cost education through the second year of college for all Americans who could not afford to pay (President's Commission on Higher Education, 1948, 1).

Although most of the ideas advanced in Higher Education for American Democracy had antecedents in the late 1930s, developments during World War II widened the base of support for its proposals. Whereas the Depression had seemed to confirm the undeniable trend toward lower rates of youth participation in the labor market, during the war the economy revived, and as 18- and 19-year olds entered the service, jobs opened in factories and stores for younger teenagers. The number of youth aged 14 to 17 in the labor force rose from less than one million in the summer of 1940 to three million by the summer of 1942 (Gilbert, 1986, 19). Demand for work permits surged among boys and girls alike, but especially among boys. In April 1944 a Census Bureau sample indicated that one in five schoolboys aged 14 to 15 and two in five aged 16 to 17 were gainfully employed (Modell, 1989, 166).

Many of these young workers continued to attend school, but as late as October 1946, six months after V-E Day, the proportion of those in their upper teens enrolled in school was lower than in 1940 (Modell, 1989, 168). These developments reversed the long-term trend between 1900 and 1940 toward declining participation by youth in the labor market and they raised some disturbing possibilities. If young people sprang at job opportunities during the war, they might continue to do so afterward, especially if the economy remained buoyant. Their quest for work would bring them into contact with demobilized veterans, with results that no one could predict with precision but which all educators feared: young people with only a single skill displaced by veterans; veterans displaced and embittered by competition with virtual child laborers. It was just this fear of a chaotic demobilization that had spurred Congress to pass the Servicemen's Readjustment Act (the G.I. Bill) in 1944. By encouraging veterans to enroll in colleges, the G.I. Bill, it was hoped, would soften pressure on jobs in the immediate postwar era.

Apprehension of chaotic demobilization and anxiety about independent, job-seeking youth coalesced to impart new urgency to the subject of dropouts. The first chapter of the Educational Policies Commission Report Education for All American Youth (1945) projected "the history that should not happen." In this hypothetical scenario the federal government would revive the NYA and CCC under the guise of a new National Bureau of Youth Service, which would bring order out of chaos by training young people for jobs at the price of federal control of education. If this occurred, the report prophecied, "the locally administered high school, for so many years the center of the American dream of equal opportunity through education [would join] the Latin grammar school of the seventeenth century and the academy of the nineteenth in the great wastebasket of history" (Educational Policies Commission, 1945, 10).

By 1952 a notably calmer update of Education for All American Youth was published. Subtitled "A Further Look," this document argued that the crisis created by the war had passed, mainly because the war had given the schools the resources to solve the very problem it had created. With the demise of the NYA and CCC, the federal government had made no new effort to conduct its own parallel vocational training program. Further, the success of wartime job training programs had persuaded educators that schools could train youth for immediate employment. Industrial equipment used to train war workers under such federal programs as Training Within Industry had been handed over to the schools at the war's conclusion to high schools and public junior colleges. The proliferation of junior colleges, which enrolled nearly three times as many students in 1947-48 as in 1943-44, now afforded young people opportunities to pursue vocational education at public expense beyond the twelth grade, and in conjunction with locally sponsored vocational-technical centers, they made it possible for dropouts to drop back in again. Everywhere the authors of the updated report detected a new attitude toward school retention. Increasingly, schools conducted follow-up studies of dropouts and planned programs to reduce school leaving (Educational Policies Commission, 1952, 183-202, 327).

In sum, the experience of World War II sent educators a mixed message about school retention. The growth of junior college enrollments during the war (especially adult enrollments) and the new availability of federal surplus equipment for industrial education spurred the expectation that both school leavers and graduates could acquire job training in their late teens and early twenties, either in a community college or in a muncipal vocational-technical center. From this perspective, school leavers were not necessarily finished with education. At the same time, educators grew alarmed by the rise in youth employment during the war, feared that it might lead to a reversal of the benign trend toward lower participation by youth in the labor market, and became more persuaded that ever before of the importance of retaining young people continuously through high school.

This commitment owed a great deal to a new understanding of the reasons for dropping out and to new concepts of how to retain young people in school.

The Frustrated Adolescent. During the Progressive era and throughout the interwar years vocational education had struck most educators as the only plausible way to retain young people who were indifferent to academic courses. But vocationalism had long been open to a variety of objectives: it was expensive if rightly conducted; it was beyond the resources of small high schools; and it threatened to shatter the ideal of high school as a common experience that would forge a shared civic culture among youth. In addition, during the interwar years all major educational policy statements agreed that economic necessity was the root cause of dropping out. Viewed from this perspective, a significant amount of school leaving seemed inevitable, regardless of the curriculum.

The understanding of school leaving that flowered in the 1950s, especially in connection with the Life Adjustment movement, portrayed school leavers and school vandals as similarly drawn from the ranks of "frustrated" young people, adolescents whose low self-esteem led them to engage in self-destructive behavior. The task of high school therefore was not to train young people for jobs or to encourage their departure from school for job-training programs but to enhance their feelings of self-worth (Segel, 1951, 43-60). It was precisely their lack of self-esteem that made them want to leave school in the first instance and that left them too dispirited either to hold jobs and to succeed in training programs. In turn, low self-esteem threatened to lead youth into delinquency, a subject that evoked a barrage of publicity in the 1950s (Gilbert, 1986). Fears of a national wave of delinquency raised the stakes, in effect, for where Hollingshead had described dropping out as initiating a painful but essentially unthreatening process of adjustment to lower-class status, social commentators in the 1950s were more likely to link dropping out to crime.

The notion that school leavers were suffering from frustration challenged and gradually subverted the traditional view of dropping out as necessitated by lower-class family economies, and it buttressed the view that school leaving had to be understood as the result of deficient motivation rather than as the product of poverty as such (Segel, 1951, 25-26). The difference was crucial, for where policymakers of the late 1930s had emphasized public intervention on behalf of the poor youth who was willing and capable but who lacked the means to stay in school, the new wisdom of the 1950s stressed finding ways to motivate students who were unwilling to stay in school.

The objective of raising the self-esteem of frustrated adolescents could be accomplished by guiding them into courses in which they could scarcely not succeed and by making more extensive provisions for their in-school counselling. Courses that guaranteed success were those that addressed the needs of emotionally-adjusting adolescents. For example, the authors of Education for All American Youth praised a course in "Family Living" in a rural high school in which students learned "how to get along with others," how to make a wise choice of a mate, how to meet family crises, and "the economic problems of family life" (Educational Policies Commission, 1952, 360).

The Life Adjustment movement lost steam in the wake of Sputnik but it left a significant legacy to American high schools and to policymakers, who persisted long after the 1950s in the view that education had to be tailored to individual psychological needs and that ways had to be found to retain young people who loathed school. At least for frustrated teenagers with low self-esteem, the subjects taught in high school were less important than the therapies to which students brought together in a classroom could be exposed. The persistent implication of this approach was that the same psycho-social factors that propelled students to leave school would encourage, even guarantee, their social alienation.

Life Adjustment also became one of the main vehicles by which new ideas about intelligence and testing entered secondary education. The intelligence tests administered to inductees during World War I had popularized the notion of I.Q. and had led to a general hue and cry about the menace of the feeble-minded. One conclusion, widely if misleadingly drawn from the test results, was that the average American had the I.Q. of a thirteen-year-old. In the 1920s psychologists tried to discount the more extreme conclusions drawn from their intelligence tests, but advocates of universal secondary education were forced into repeated attacks on the idea, presumably widespread, that many teenagers were too dumb to benefit from high school. In contrast, new types of tests administered to World War II inductees (tests whose basic principles were first developed in the 1930s) led to radically different conclusions, including the discounting of the notion of a general, undifferentiated "intelligence." Published assessments of the military's testing program in World War II coincided with the publication of Higher Education for American Democracy and contributed to the conclusion that a high proportion of the population had the capacity for one or another type of advanced (postsecondary) education. By implication, virtually anyone had the ability to profit from secondary school. As Education of All American Youth proclaimed: "all students were potential good citizens, regardless of I.Q." (Educational Policies Commission, 1952, 358).[10]

A pair of articles in Life in the spring of 1960, respectively entitled "Dropout Tragedies" and "A Hopeful Second Chance," embodied many of the perceptions of school leavers that marked the 1950s. The stories portrayed the effects of dropping out mainly in terms of personal tragedy and emphasized the psychological alienation of school leavers, young people for whom actual departure from school was merely the capstone of a long process of psychological withdrawal from family and peers.[11]

Issues of the 1960s. Labelled "social dynamite," school leaving increasingly became an obsession of educators in the 1950s and 1960s. Educators displayed "not so much esteem for adequate schooling" than "a feeling of alarm over the effects of its absence" (Tannenbaum, 1966, 1). More was involved here than the fact that steadily rising levels of educational attainment made dropouts more noticeable. Anxiety over dropouts tends to reflect fears of what will become of them rather than alarm at their actual departure from school. In the 1950s both educators and the public predicted that dropouts would become lawless, and in the 1960s they added jobless. This fear of combined lawlessness and joblessness was not without precedent, for Maxine Davis and Howard Bell had voiced concern in the late 1930s about these possibilities. But World War II had extinguished their fears. The youth observed by August Hollingshead at the start of the 1940s were getting jobs and settling down. However painful their process of "adjustment," they were not experiencing any sustained social alienation.

Rising rates of youth unemployment in the 1960s contributed to the heightened worries about dropouts, but what was most alarming were the reasons widely believed to have driven up unemployment rates among youth: the maturing of the baby boom and automation. In 1955, 16-to-19-year-olds accounted for 9.0 percent of the population; twenty years later they accounted for 12.7 percent (Osterman, 1980, 104). Policymakers may have identified the wrong villain, for, as Osterman noted, "the economy responded reasonably well to the influx of youth" (Osterman, 1980, 104).[12] Nevertheless, unemployment among youth rose in the 1960s and this was especially true of black youth, whose unemployment rates were double those of white youth. Further, as long as contemporaries blamed the baby boom and automation for unemployment, silver linings were hard to find. The baby boom would burden the economy with an apparent excess of job seekers for decades, while automation would steadily erode the kinds of jobs traditionally available to dropouts.

At first, federal policymakers saw automation as a threat to adult workers, who were targeted by the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962 (MDTA). With the return of prosperity after 1962, the economy quickly absorbed older workers. The "problem" that the MDTA addressed virtually disappeared. But the assumption that technological advances gradually would shrink demand for low-skilled workers persisted, and by the mid-1960s it had become the basis for gloomy forecasts about the future of young workers. *Life* warned in 1963 of the loss of 24 million unskilled and semi-skilled jobs by 1970 (Tannenbaum, 1966, 3). "All youth will have difficulty finding work," one commentator concluded; "the dropout will not stand a chance" (Tannenbaum, 1966, 3).

Although inclined to substitute the "global economy" for automation, policymakers use much the same language now. But one difference between the mid-1960s approach to dropouts and that of the early 1990s bears noting. Today, most writers appear to assume that the primary responsibility for discouraging students from dropping out of high school lies with educational officials. For various reasons, in the mid-1960s the role of formal education was an open question. The civil rights movement and urban riots focused the attention of policymakers on black youth, who were widely perceived as victims of a "culture of poverty" that required underlying shifts in social policy, not just bandages applied by school principals (Tannenbaum, 1966, 19-21). In addition, although initially aimed at adult (and mainly white) workers, the MDTA and the manpower approach it represented impressed many federal officials as superior to reliance on school officials. Established under the Department of Labor, the MDTA had bypassed the vocational-education establishment, which had close ties to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, the National Education Association, and the American Vocational Association (a powerful lobby for school-based vocational education), and which had always challenged direct federal training programs. Proponents of federal manpower programs blamed the vocational-education establishment, and by implication public-school administrators, for decades of failure to train workers for the jobs of today and tomorrow (Mangum and Walsh, 1973, 49-50).

Skeptical of vocational education, manpower advocates assumed that many young people would fail to complete high school. Like the framers of the NYA and CCC in the 1930s, they looked to training programs conducted by specialists (not necessarily educators) to ready youth for employment. In contrast, the NEA and the American Vocational Association insisted that schools could do the job and that vocational education's ultimate test lay in its ability to encourage school completion rather than in the quality of job training it offered (Ginzberg, 1975).

Even before 1965 vocational educators succeeded in gaining a significant measure of control over manpower programs. An internecine struggle within the Department of Labor resulted in the turning over to vocational educators of responsibility for administering the department's training programs, a development that effectively ended any chance that the federal government would conduct its own educational system in competition with traditional school-based vocational education (Mangum and Walsh, 1973, 50). The Vocational Education Act of 1963 and its subsequent 1968 amendments discouraged further growth of residential training programs like the Job Corps, which had been created by the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964. In addition, most of the funding categories established by the 1963 and 1968 legislation focused on the role of secondary schools, and virtually all provisions related to schools of one sort or another (Nystrom and Bayne, 1979, 44-46). The 1968 amendments specifically funded cooperative vocational education and work study, two measures that aimed at encouraging young people to finish school by enabling them to earn modest wages while enrolled (Nystrom and Bayne, 1979, 45).

Perspectives of the 1970s. The reaction against federal manpower programs was broadly based. It included not only public-school educators but also civil rights advocates, who feared that such programs would prepare black youth (who were disproportionately enrolled in most federal manpower programs) for low-level jobs; conservatives, who worried about the expense of manpower programs and who feared that the federal government would create work relief to find employment for their graduates; and many economists who doubted that unemployment and job turnover added up to significant problems (Ulman, 1974, 95-99).[13] Cracks in the consensus about the value of manpower training programs raised new questions about the value of vocational education outside of the workplace.

Vocational educators long have envisioned school vocational programs as serving two objectives: imparting marketable skills and retaining youth in school. Public educators outside of vocational education have supported the latter objective while giving mixed reviews to the former, but the lukewarm response of school administrators to the training role of vocational education has not interfered in any significant way with the ability of vocational educators to secure funding. Ever since the campaign that resulted in passage of the Smith-Hughes Act, vocational educators have proven effective lobbyists for federal funds to subsidize themselves. In 1938 President Roosevelt complained about vocational lobbyists who had secured a much larger appropriation for their programs than he favored and "who are interested in the emoluments paid in part from Federal funds" (quoted in Krug, 1972, 311). The success of the vocational-education lobby in wresting control of the MDTA's training progrms from the Department of Labor in the early 1960s had many precedents. Yet at no point has the vocational education establishment been able to point to any persuasive body of evidence to demonstrate that school-based vocational courses actually impart marketable skills. As Osterman observed in 1980: "Most evidence today suggests a minimal effect [of vocational education] even with respect to placement in jobs whose skills are related to those studied in school, and the pre-World War II picture seems not to have been much different" (Osterman, 1980, 68; Reubens, 1974; Licht, 1992, 92-93).

Although analysts long have doubted the value of vocational education as a means of occupational training, it was not until the

1970s that a sustained assault on vocational education developed. In the early 1960s several economists had put forth "human capital theory," which contended that increments of formal schooling yielded long-term wage gains for individuals (Adkins, 1974, 111-145). These economists urged "investment in people" as a social strategy. In general, human capital theory was compatible with both vocational education and manpower training, for while the latter did not depend on formal schooling, nevertheless it purported to increase the skills of workers, the same goal proclaimed by vocational educators. By the late 1960s and especially in the 1970s human capital theory and all of its progeny were coming under attacks that arose in the context of disillusion with manpower training programs. In contrast to those who complained about the expense of manpower programs or the evils of a federally-subsidized alternative to the school, those who targeted human capital theory as such doubted the efficacy of skill augmentation as a means of redistributing earnings. If earning depended on factors other than skill, then it made little difference who conducted programs designed to enhance skill or how efficiently they were run; vocational education and manpower training alike rested on false assumptions (Cain, 1976, 1217).

Critics of the benefits of enhancing skills disagreed among themselves on many issues, but they shared the belief that dual or segmented markets characterized the American economy. In this view, occupations could be divided into primary and secondary sectors. The former offer training opportunities (on the job) and ladders of advancement; the latter provide no opportunities to speak of for acquiring skills, have no ladders of advancement, and are marked by high turnover (Osterman, 1980, 22). In general, those who subscribed to the theory of segmented labor markets (SLM) argued that the secondary market primarily was composed of teenagers and minorities (some would add women). This distinction was not entirely new. Economists since John Stuart Mill had been describing something like a secondary labor market, which they sometimes called the theory of "non-competing groups." But SLM theory was notably boosted in the 1970s by the disullusion among liberals and leftists with the War on Poverty and the Great Society. In general, they employed dual-market theory to account for the persistence of poverty and unemployment amid plenty; more specifically, they invoked it to explain why the distribution of income has failed to move toward greater equality while the distribution of education has done so (Thurow, 1972, 69-70).

This conflict among economists continues to have a variety of implications for education. Consider, for example, the issue of skills. From the perspective of human capital theory, enhancing the skills of workers through education will yield multiple benefits. It will raise productivity, reduce competition among unskilled workers for low-skilled jobs (by increasing the pool of skilled workers), and contribute to equalizing the wages of skilled workers. All of this assumes that the demand for skilled workers is shaped by the size of the pool of skilled workers; where shortages exist, wage increases will operate to increase the number of applicants with the right skills. Schools and government training programs can contribute to the pool of skilled workers, especially if they accurately forecast trends in demand. Educational policymakers, who were partial to the assumptions behind human capital theory even before the latter had a name, would add that modern society requires ever more complex skills, that education (schooling) must adapt to these requirements by increased vocational offerings, and that a curriculum offering marketable skills will contribute to retaining students until graduation.

SLM theory and related strains of criticism pointed toward a different conclusion. In this alternative view, skills inhere in jobs rather than in applicants. Most training occurs after the worker gets the job. The labor market matches trainable (rather than trained) applicants with training ladders and thus the supply of job skills is created by employer requirements, by the skills that inhere in the job the employer wants to fill (Thurow, 1972, 72). To avoid wasting money training applicants who will jump to other jobs, employers make their training programs as company-specific as possible. Thus any effort to increase skills before entry into the labor market is unlikely to succeed.

This configuration of contentions leaves open the question of how employers select trainees. Whatever their view of SLM theory, critics of human-capital theory have responded to this question by emphasizing the credentialling role of education. In the 1970s many social scientists swung toward the position that the rewards of schooling did not depend either on the occupational skills it imparted or on the general knowledge and intelligence usually associated with education. Books like Ivar Berg's Education and Jobs: The Great Training Robbery flatly denied any relationship between increments of schooling and higher productivity (Berg, 1970, 85-104). Others put forward less extreme versions of this argument by pointing to the tendency of educational levels to rise faster than job requirements for education, and they have concluded that such increases as have occurred in educational requirements for jobs have reflected the expansion of the pool of educated applicants rather than any reasoned assessment of the education demanded by occupations (Adkins, 1974, 111-145; Rawlins and Ulman, 1974, 232).[14] In effect, faced with a superabundance of applicants with high levels of educational attainment, employers simply use attainment as a quick screening device for personality traits such as "trainability" that they believe are required for the jobs they advertise (Rawlins and Ulman, 1974, 232). So far from subjecting this assumed association to a test, employers merely take it for granted.

As was true of the recognition of segmented labor markets, there were precedents for the awareness of the credentialling role of schools (Tyack, 1974, 273). But it was mainly in the 1970s that analysts argued that the relationship between education and work had to be understood fundamentally in terms of levels of education rather than skills imparted by education. What matters, in other words, is that employers assume that those with desirable levels of attainment have the desired qualities; whether job applicants actually possess those qualities does not significantly influence employers' decisions.

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s this line of analysis coexisted with the more traditional argument that the value of schooling lay in the skills students learned. While conceptually antagonistic, these viewpoints agree on the importance of formal education at least through high school. Few argue with the proposition that those with superior levels of educational attainment will earn more over the long run. But the implications of the two views differ. One party conceives of high school as a time to acquire marketable skills; the other sees persistence in high school and beyond, indeed all education, as a "defensive necessity." As Thurow wrote, "education becomes a good investment, not because it would raise people's incomes above what they would have been if no one had increased his education, but because it raises their income above what it will be if others acquire an education and they do not" (Thurow, 1972, 79). To a degree, these outlooks also conflict over the prospects of teenagers in the labor market. Those who believed that schools can effectively teach marketable skills incline to the view that high school graduates will find employment in occupations that require skilled or semi-skilled workers and that contain ladders of advancement. In contrast, opponents see a gloomy market for high school graduates and an even gloomier one for dropouts. From their perspective, employers in the primary market will prefer older workers, especially those with higher education, while those between the ages of 18 and 21 will be shunted into the secondary market, regardless of whether they graduate from high school.

Policy Implications. The debate over labor markets has had negligible direct impact on educators. Most educators continue to operate on human-capital assumptions, partly because human-capital theory places education at the forefront of accommodating change and partly because educators who advocate universal secondary education primarily on psycho-social grounds continue to find the economic argument for prolonged schooling an effective way to arouse public support. Yet while most educators have ignored the debate, the latter has considerable relevance to educational policy relating to school completion. One approach to dropouts is to emphasize some combination of carrots and sticks to encourage students to persist in school until age 18. This approach has given rise to innumerable initiatives in the last decade. Some of these have arisen within individual schools and depend on charismatic administrators or teachers; others, like New York City's Dropout Prevention Initiative and the West Virginia program of denying driver's licenses to school leavers under 18, have originated with municipal or state authorities. The alternative approach has stressed that poorly motivated students should be allowed to drop out of high school on the expectation that many of them will later return to complete high school or that they will pass the GED tests (about 60 percent of high school dropouts eventually either complete high school or pass the GED tests). They also point to the expense of dropout prevention programs and question their effectiveness. Although only a few programs have been subjected to scrutiny, there is little evidence that they are cost effective (Toby and Armor, 1992, 76-90). In addition, preoccupation with preventing dropping out threatens a return to the days of Life Adjustment, when public schools diluted their curriculum to retain students.

Viewed from the perspective of contemporary economic theories, the first approach seems more compatible with human-capital theory, which generally emphasizes the value of acquiring skills before entry into the labor market.[15] In human capital theory, employers have no necessary preference for older workers; they will not go on hiring expensive university graduates if they can hire cheaper high school graduates with the right skills. The critics of human capital theory question this assumption on empirical grounds by pointing to the inertia characteristic of large bureaucratic organizations, which discourages any empirical assessment of the value of such factors as age or credentials. For those who believe that occupational skills usually are learned on the job rather than before entry into the labor market and that industries with ladders of advancement will prefer older job applicants to teenagers, it does not make much difference whether a student persists in school until age 18 or drops out and later reenters the educational system, for employers are less impressed by what someone claims to have learned in high school than by that person's age or credentials.

Viewed from the perspective of American educational history, a somewhat different picture emerges. The conflict between advocates of full-time versus part-time secondary education in the early twentieth century involved some of the same issues described above. The efficiency educators like Prosser and Snedden acknowledged that school leavers would encounter "dead-end" jobs, but they quickly added that the same was true of all teenagers. Access to better jobs depended mainly on age, not on educational attainment. In contrast, their opponents drew a direct connection between educational attainment and long-term wages. But these educators also rested their case for full-time schooling primarily on its social value. Like Horace Mann, Clarence Kingsley, principal author of the Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education, cherished the ideal of common schooling. The achievement of "social solidarity" through shared educational experiences mattered more than the "money value" of schooling. On balance, the economic argument for schooling has always been more window-dressing than substance. Even the 1940 report of the Educational Policies Commission on Education and Economic Well-Being ultimately subordinated the economic value of schooling to its social dividends.

In sum, educators have never debated the value of schooling in quite the same fashion as have economists. Yet educators have been in conflict among themselves about the scope of universal secondary education; even progressive advocates have questioned the value of coercing the unmotivated to persist in school. In the late 1930s and early 1940s the Educational Policies Commission emphasized the need to offer all motivated youth an equal opportunity for schooling, but its attitude toward attendance by unmotivated youth was at best ambivalent. The growth of junior colleges and the invention of the GED tests during World War II put in place alternative mechanisms for dealing with those who lacked motivation during their teens.

Inasmuch as history never exactly repeats itself, the choice between encouraging continuous schooling and tolerating discontinuous schooling has never confronted successive generations in exactly the same form. The racial and ethnic correlatives of school persistence, which George Counts documented in 1922, loom larger now in the thinking of educators than the social-class correlatives that Counts also documented. Yet although more likely to focus on race than on class, contemporary educators share Counts's belief that schools must forge a democratic culture, that education must truly be "common." It was as plausible for Counts, writing in the shadow of the great strikes of 1919, to worry about the class fissures in American society as for educators now to address racial fissures. Similarly, before mid-century educators were likely to emphasize economic necessity as the root cause of school leaving, while now they are more inclined to stress dropping out as a symptom of an underlying process of psycho-social alienation that begins in grade school. From this perspective, dropping out of high school is threatening rather than merely unwise, for it represents a kind of disaffiliation from society itself.

Although economists and educators have brought different emphases to the subject of school completion, these viewpoints help us to see the issue more clearly and to make some educated guesses about the likely direction of policy. Over the course of the twentieth century, educators rather than economists have been the primary shapers of policy. Economists infrequently footnote educators. Rather, educators footnote economists, especially the ones who support their belief in the value of education as the communication of skills. Whatever the descriptive value of SLM theory and its attendant stress on credentialling, economists in the neo-classical mainstream will continue to be suspicious of that theory and its implications on theoretical grounds. Educators, especially those who engage in the enterprise of formulating policy rather than in classroom teaching, will continue to advocate policies to realize the ideal of universal secondary education, even if this means muting calls for a more rigorous high-school curriculum. It is also likely that they will advocate high-school completion by age 18, a goal stated long ago by the Cardinal Principles and reinforced today by the fear that teenaged dropouts are more likely to graduate to the jailhouse than to the community college.

1. In 1950 the median for blacks was 71.3% of the white median; by 1986 median for blacks had risen to 99.2% of the median for whites.

2. For recent efforts by the National Center for Education Statistics to devise a definition of dropping out for use in gathering data for its annual survey of state-level education agencies, see National Center for Education Statistics, 1992, 45-46.

3. The event rate, over 6% in the late 1970s, fell to 4% in 1991. The rate for black males fell from about 9% in 1981 to about 5% in 1991. In the same period, the white male rate fell from about 5% to about 3%, that for white females from about 5% to just under 4%. The percentage of young persons who are status dropouts declined from approximately 15% of those 16 through 24 in 1972 to approximately 13% in 1991. During this period the status rate for blacks dropped from 21% to 14%, that for whites from 12% to 9%. Hispanics make up an increasing proportion of all dropouts, in part because of their higher dropout rates and in part because of their growing proportion of the population (NCES, 1992, 8, 20-21).

4. The event and status dropout rates are based on data from the Current Population Survey (CPS), a survey conducted each October by the Bureau of the Census. Although nationally-representative in theory, "the sample sizes in CPS may result in imprecise estimates of dropout and completion rates for important subgroups, including subregional areas and some minority subpopulations" (NCES, 1992, 49). Wide annual variations in Hispanic event rates may reflect the small sample size of Hispanics in CPS (NCES, 1992, 7). In recent years NCES has conducted field tests to improve the CPS data.

5. Richardson notes that states where enrollments levels were already high were more likely to enact compulsory school laws; see John B. Richardson, "Variations in Date of Enactment of Compulsory School Attendance Laws: An Empirical Inquiry," _Sociology of Education_, _53_ (July, 1980), 157-163. Most scholars who have studied nineteenth-century school laws doubt that they had a signifcant impact on attendance; see William M. Landes and Lewis Solomon, "Compulsory Schooling Legislation: An Economic Analysis of Law and Social Change in the Ninteenth Century," _Journal of Economic History_, _32_ (March, 1972), 54-87. The relationship appears to have been the other way around: high levels of attendance contributed to the passage of compulsory attendance laws, partly because it was cheaper to compel attendance in states where it was already high and partly because such states were likely to have well-organized lobbies of teachers and school officials to advocate compulsory legislation; see also John W. Meyer, et al., "Public Education and Nation Building: Enrollment and Bureaucratization in American States, 1870-1930," _American Journal of Sociology_, _85_ (Nov., 1979), 591-617.

6. Recent studies have undermined the assertion of revisionist historians in the 1970s that schools merely reproduced the existing class structure. Joel Perlmann has demonstrated that students who attended high school in the late 19th- and early 20th-century Providence were much more likely than non-attenders with similar ethnic and class characteristics to advance into prestigious occupations; see Perlmann, Ethnic Differences: Schooling and Social Structure among the Irish, Italians, Jews, and Blacks in an American City, 1880-1935 (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 38-40. Racial discrimination largely negated the cash value of secondary schooling for blacks; Perlmann notes (p. 197) that "even blacks who received higher grades than whites could expect no dimunition of the race handicap on jobs." For additional evidence of the economic value of secondary schooling see Reed Ueda, Avenues to Adulthood: The Origins of the High School and Social Mobility in an American Suburb (Cambridge, 1987). Labaree has found that, once admitted, working-class children did as well as middle-class children in Philadelphia's Central High School; see David F. Labaree, The Making of an American High School: The Credentials Market and the Central High School of Philadelphia, 1838, 1939 (New Haven, 1988).

7. Although entry into 19th-century high schools was restricted by entrance examinations and graduation by opportunity costs. Vinovskis has found that 19% of children in Essex County, Massachusetts, in 1860 attended either a public high school or a comparable private academy; see Maris A. Vinovskis, "Have We Underestimated the Extent of Antebellum High School Attendance?" History of Education Quarterly, 28 (1988), 551-567.

8. School-based commercial classes especially worked to the advantage of girls, for employers were more relucant to give on-the-job training to females, who, employers feared, were more likely than boys to leave employment. See Susan B. Carter and Mark Prus, "The Labor Market and the American High School Girl, 1890-1928," Journal of Economic History, 42 (1982), 163-71.

9. Hollingshead's class IV corresponds roughly to the usual conception of the working class, people who were poor but who held steady work and manifested pride in their homes. His class V was really an underclass composed of demoralized occasional workers, people who were looked down upon as "scum" by all the other social classes of Elmtown.

10. World War II also gave rise to the General Educational Development tests (GED). These were the brainchild of Cornelius P. Turner, a Massachusetts school superintendent who joined the navy during the war. Assigned to the U.S. Armed Forces Institute in Madison, Wisconsin, Turner developed the GED tests so that soldiers who lacked a high school diploma could qualify for the Institute's college-level correspondence courses by demonstrating that they had acquired the equivalent of a high school diploma. After the war the tests were extended to civilians, but it was not until 1959 that

the number of non-veteran adults taking the tests exceeded the number of veterans; see Toby and Armor, 1992, 87-89.

11. "Dropout Tragedies," Life (May 2, 1960), 106A-113; "A Hopeful Second Chance," Life (May 9, 1960), 102-109.

12. Osterman notes that the percentage of youth 18-24 who were enrolled in school rose from 14.2% in 1950 to 31.1% in 1970. This development probably dampened the impact of the baby boom, for students have lower rates of labor-force participation than do non-students; see Paul Osterman, Getting Started: The Youth Labor Market (Cambridge, Mass., 1980, p. 104).

13. Andrew Brimmer found that blacks accounted for more than half of the enrollees in the Job Corps, Neighborhood Youth Corps, and similar Great Society programs; see Brimmer, "Economic Developments in the Black Community," in Eli Ginzberg and Robert M. Solow, eds., The Great Society (New York, 1974), pp. 146-65.

14. Adkins notes that in the 1930s, when demand for college-educated manpower fell sharply, no corresponding decline in the pool of college graduates occurred (Adkins, 1974, 126). He postulates that rises in educational attainment have been driven primarily by the values of parents and children rather than by observation of the labor market and, by implication, levels of attainment will respond only slowly to changes in job requirements (Adkins, 1974, 119). Rawlins and Ulman (1974, 202) advance an essentially similar view.

15. Recently, two University of Chicago economists have argued that the GED certificate lacks the same market value as a regular high school diploma; see S.V. Cameron and J.J. Heckman, "The Nonequivalence of High School Equivalents." Working Paper No. 3804. Cambridge, Mass., National Bureau of Economic Research. The methodology of this study has been subjected to criticism. See Donald Fork, Mary Frase, Rene Gonzalez and Tommy Tomlinson, with the Assistance of Aaron Pallas, "What Do We Know and What Do We Need to Know." Draft paper on National Goal #2, U.S. Department of Education, Office of Education Improvement and Research, 1992, p. 28-29.

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CHAPTER 12

RHETORIC AND REFORM:
THE AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULUM, 1945-1990

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Rhetoric and Reform: The American High School Curriculum, 1945-1990

Introduction

In September, 1989 President George Bush and the nation's governors issued a statement committing themselves to revitalizing American public education by establishing "clear national performance goals, goals that will make us internationally competitive."[1] Two of these goals focus on changing the basic curriculum in American schools in order to realize substantial educational gains by the year 2000. Goal Three declares that "American students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment." Goal Four states that "U.S. students will be the first in the world in science and math achievement."[2]

The presidential and gubernatorial commitment to these national performance goals is both historic and unprecedented but it is hardly the first time that national leaders have focused their attention on the nation's schools and sought to substantially alter the school curriculum. This essay analyzes the historic significance of the current reform efforts represented by Goals Three and Four and assesses their relationship to previous attempts to reshape secondary education since the end of World War II.[3] Educational historians generally have described the past half-century of curricular reforms in terms of sharp swings between two diametrically opposite philosophical and educational poles, often represented as a recurring debate between proponents of the Committee of Ten Report (1893), and advocates of the *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education* (1918). In this model, the Committee of Ten position argues that "all high school students should be educated with equal seriousness in the great areas of human knowledge, [i.e. traditional academic subjects] and that occupational decisions should be put off until after graduation, lest students from poorer homes lose out." The *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education* position, on the other hand, maintains that the focus of the high school should be on the "nature and the needs of students" rather than on the often difficult and arid demands of academic disciplines.[4] From this perspective "education was considered not so much a training and disciplining of the mind as a process of developing social and civic awareness and responsibility."[5]

Most educational historians who have written on curriculum change in the twentieth century describe reforms in terms of a series of sharp pendulum swings toward either the academic rigor of the Committee of Ten or toward students needs and relevance of the Cardinal Principles. Indeed, historians who agree on little else accept that model of curriculum change as particularly useful in describing all of the curriculum reform efforts up to and including the current campaign to establish a core curriculum for all students. We begin this essay with a brief overview of that picture of reform and counter-reform. In the second section of the essay, however, we challenge that conventional "swinging pendulum" model of high school curriculum change through analyses of a series of national surveys conducted largely by the U.S. Office of Education (USOE). In the third section, we focus on science and mathematics course-taking by analyzing additional surveys of enrollments in those subject areas. Finally, we assess the curriculum reforms embodied in the national goals and argue that despite similarities to earlier back-to-basics movements, this new effort appears to mark a major break with past campaigns in two respects--in its recommended core course of study for all students and its setting of clear empirical standards for knowing if and when the reform has been a success.

Curriculum Change in American Secondary Education, 1945-92: The Conventional Wisdom

For the past twenty-five years, educational historians have been locked in an intense debate about the nature and function of secondary education in the United States. While this debate has produced a number of fierce exchanges between scholars, it is also marked by a surprising consensus on the "basic facts" with historians largely arguing over the meaning of events and developments rather than the content of the historical record. Our analysis by contrast challenges not only the prevailing interpretations but also many of the "facts" upon which these interpretations are constructed. To demonstrate precisely how our work differs from that of other scholars, we first present the conventional model of the modern history of the curriculum of the American high school.

Almost every account of the modern history of the American high school describes curricular changes in terms of dramatic swings between two diametrically opposed educational and philosophical poles.[6] Historians generally agree that sometime in the 1920s, as high school enrollments rose dramatically, the curricular pendulum swung sharply away from the vision of the Committee of Ten toward that of the Cardinal Principles. High schools increased both the number and types of courses they offered, introduced curricular tracks that provided students with vocational programs that required fewer academic classes for graduation, and essentially began to shift their focus from the "needs of society" to "the needs of youth."[7] A sharp drop in educational resources in the 1930s caused a brief hiatus in this trend, even in the face of rising enrollments, as schools were forced to cut offerings in vocational education, art and music. During World War II, despite protests from such defenders of the academic tradition as William C. Bagley and Isaac L. Kandel, the trend toward programs that stressed the "practical" resumed apace as educators joined the war effort by emphasizing vocational education and predinduction training over academic course work in the high schools.[8]

Following the war the debate over the high school curriculum revived with the publication of two new studies, Harvard University's *General Education in a Free Society* that reaffirmed many of the ideas espoused by the Committee of Ten, and the Educational Policy Commission's *Education for All American Youth* that called for a still stronger commitment to the practical curricula of the Cardinal Principles. Amid this debate, the U. S. Office of Education's Division of Vocational Education invited a group of educators to Washington to discuss the growing number of high school students that many school people believed were ill-suited for either the college preparatory or vocational tracks. The high point of this conference was the "Prosser Resolution," a ringing reaffirmation of the ideals of the Cardinal Principles.[9] The resolution declared:

> It is the belief of this conference that, with the aid of this report in its final form, the vocational school of a community will be able better to prepare 20 percent of the youth of secondary school age for entrance upon desirable skilled occupations; and that the high school will continue to prepare another 20 percent for entrance to college. We do not believe that the remaining 60 percent of our youth of secondary school age will receive the life adjustment training they need and to which they are entitled as American citizens--unless and until the administrators of public education with the assistance of the vocational education leaders formulate a similar program for this group.

In essence, this life adjustment education "consisted of guidance and education in citizenship, home and family life, use of leisure, health, tools of learning, work experience and occupational adjustment."[10]

Educators enthusiastically embraced this program and, historians contend, by the mid-1950s life adjustment education had been adopted in "thousands of schools throughout the land."[11] This triumph, however, did not go uncontested. As early as 1949, Mortimer Smith published *And Madly Teach* which denounced the deterioration of academic standards in secondary education and called on the schools to reassume their "historic role as moral and intellectual teacher." Smith's book was only the first in a series of impassioned attacks by proponents of the traditional academic curriculum on the changing character of the high school curriculum. By far the most influential of these works, Arthur Bestor's *Educational Wastelands*, demanded that American high schools return to the teaching of "disciplined intelligence" and proclaimed that "schools exist to teach *something* and that this something is the power to think."[12]

Clashes between these critics and the defenders of the educational status quo dominated both the scholarly literature and, frequently, the popular press in the mid-1950s. Nothing, however, increased the intensity nor broadened the scope of these debates more than the launch of the Sputnik satellite by the Soviet Union in October, 1957. Beyond its clear military and technological significance, Sputnik had a profound impact on the great educational debates of the mid-1950s. The successful launch seemed to indicate that the Soviet Union had surpassed the United States technologically, a situation that cast serious doubts about the condition and quality of American education. Indeed, Sputnik seemed to give credence to the arguments of such critics as Smith and Bestor who had argued that life-adjustment and similar programs had led to a serious decline in the quality of secondary schools. Other critics of the public schools such as Admiral Hyman Rickover took these arguments farther and maintained that the deterioration of secondary education had contributed to our inability to compete successfully with the Soviet Union.[13]

In the late 1950s, as a result of pre- and post-Sputnik criticism, historians conventionally agree that the curricular pendulum swung back toward greater emphasis on rigorous academic standards with renewed interest in the quality of math, science, and foreign language education. In 1958, the federal government threw its weight behind these efforts by passing the National Defense Education Act which directed money toward improving achievement in math, science, and foreign languages. In addition, early in 1959 James B. Conant, former president of Harvard University, published a best-selling book, *The American High School Today*, which called for secondary schools to reestablish strong academic curricula and to more efficiently sort students by ability. Schools could thus train the best and brightest to realize their full potential while at the same time preparing the majority of students for "suitable" careers. In the next few years, these efforts to improve academic standards were aided by groups of leading scientists and scholars who received grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to produce new science and math curricula, textbooks, workbooks and other instructional aids all designed to provide the most up-to-date knowledge in easily accessible formats. In all, these developments have led historians such as Robert Church and Michael Sedlak to maintain that "the fifties and the sixties saw as profound a shift in thinking about education as had been seen since the Progressive era. The schools refocused on subject matter and intellectual discipline."[14]

This resurgence of commitment to academic excellence, however, was relatively shortlived. In less than a decade, such social and political developments as the civil rights movement, the War on Poverty, urban riots, student protests, the youth counter-culture, and the long, bitter controversy engendered by the War in Vietnam combined to convince many civic and educational leaders that the previous reform effort was, at best, too limited and, at worst, irrelevant to the larger crises facing the nation. In the late 1950s, the schools had been blamed for the failure to keep pace technologically with the Soviet Union and recruited as a key institution in the campaign to regain our scientific and military superiority. Ten years later new national crises stimulated a similar process as the schools again were blamed, this time for contributing to the nation's problems of race, poverty, and youthful alienation. As in the 1950s, the schools were also placed in the forefront of institutions designed to ameliorate those problems. By the late 1960s, as Diane Ravitch notes, the "educational pendulum began to swing back to a revival of progressivism."[15]

Like the first wave of progressive reformers in the early years of the twentieth century, these latter day progressives sought to transform society through educational innovation. Inspired by the works of such authors as A.S. Neill, whose book *Summerhill* described a school built upon the belief that children were "innately wise," reformers in the late 1960s and early 1970s attempted to uproot the rigid, academic and bureaucratic system that they believed was destroying the spirit of the young and contributing to their widespread alienation.[16]

Rejecting the previous reform effort that focused on raising standards and improving the teaching of content courses, this new reform campaign attempted to implement sweeping changes in every aspect of American education, including breaking down the hierarchical relationship between teachers and students, eliminating distinctions between traditional subject areas, and placing experiential learning on a par with book learning. The spearhead of this reform campaign was the "open classroom" movement which rested upon literally tearing down the walls of classrooms in order to create expansive learning environments in which teachers "facilitated" student learning by guiding young people to skills and knowledge rather than lecturing them into submission. Like earlier reforms based on student needs such as life adjustment, these innovations placed a premium on making subjects relevant to students and providing them with a wide array of choices in determining their education. While few public schools adopted the most radical of these innovations, many districts across the country adopted important aspects of this reform movement particularly in terms of increasing the number of electives available for students and offering courses that appealed to student's interests.[17]

By the mid-1970s, this reform movement was running on empty. There was growing public dissatisfaction with the condition of American schools especially over what appeared to be the collapse of order and discipline within many schools and a decline in achievement levels of unprecedented proportions. The most telling evidence of this decline was an unbroken drop since 1963 in the average scores on both the verbal and mathematical sections of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) and a similar (though less steady) fall over the same period in the composite scores on the American College Test (ACT). By 1975, there was a growing public demand for a return to "basics" both in terms of traditional discipline and attention to fundamental academic subjects.[18]

In addition, policy makers in the federal government added their voice to the growing chorus of discontent. In the early 1970s, the Nixon administration, concerned over evidence of declining productivity in the nation's economy, launched Career Education, an ambitious, federally subsidized program designed to introduce students to "the world of work" by familiarizing them with career opportunities and helping them prepare for employment while still in school. Interestingly, Career Education, like the back-to-basics movement, also represented an attack on the amorphous general track in which most of the "student needs" courses were found. In his first report to Congress in 1971, U.S. Commissioner of Education Sidney P. Marland declared, "We must eliminate anything in our curriculum which is unresponsive to either of these goals [higher education or employment], particularly the high school anachronism called the 'general curriculum,' a false compromise between the college preparatory curriculum and realistic career development."[19]

Throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s concerns about the condition of education in the United States continued to grow. In April, 1983, the curricular trend represented by the "back to basics" movement received an enormous push in the form of a brief but powerful document published by the U.S. Department of Education, *A Nation at Risk*. In ringing terms, this report warned that "the educational foundations of our society are being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people...If any unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war." Citing such evidence as the unbroken decline of SAT scores and denouncing such common aspects of American high schools as the "cafeteria style curriculum," the authors of *A Nation at Risk* issued an educational call to arms.[20]

The report had an immediate and profound impact on educational debates. Indeed, as early as June, 1983 The *New York Times* commented that *A Nation at Risk* had pushed education "to the forefront of political debate with an urgency not felt since the Soviet Satellite shook American confidence in its public schools in 1957."[21] Some recent commentators note that many of the recommendations for improving American schools that followed *A Nation at Risk*, such as bolstering curriculum standards, raising high school graduation requirements and improving teacher certification programs, appeared to have been recycled directly from the reports that appeared soon after the launch of Sputnik.[22]

Certainly one area in which such comparisons seem valid is in the effort by post-*A Nation At Risk* reformers to overturn what they believed were the worst abuses of the previous wave of reform especially the proliferation of course options for high school students. By late 1986, for example, forty-five states and the District of Columbia raised their high school graduation requirements, forty-two states increased math requirements, and thirty-four states bolstered science requirements. In all, the sweeping nature of these changes and the rapid rate at which they were adopted appeared to make the current effort the most successful of any modern curriculum reform campaign.[23]

As we noted, this picture of dramatic pendulum swings in a series of great debates over the American curriculum is widely accepted by historians We do not take issue with this general description of the debates, or with the accuracy of the positions attributed to key actors and interest groups. The key question that the remainder of this essay addresses is whether these rhetorical battles have actually led to the curriculum reforms that have been attributed to them. Historians have made claims about curriculum change based largely on what people said about curriculum reform. Few historians, however, have made any attempt to analyze and interpret changes in the course-taking patterns of American high school students that have been implied by the great curriculum debates. This failure to seek empirical support for the dominant "swinging pendulum" model of interpretation is particularly surprising in light of the fact that the U.S. Office of Education has been collecting and publishing data on the course-taking behavior of American secondary students for nearly a century.[24] We will now turn to an analysis of these data in an attempt to assess the validity of the conventional wisdom as a description of the reality of high school curriculum reform.

Subject Enrollment Changes in American Education, 1928-1987: Interpreting The Data

Efforts of the U.S. Office of Education to study changes in the high school curriculum began in 1890 and continued as an annual series until 1906. These surveys, as well as those carried out in 1910 and 1915, reported national enrollments only for a limited list of subjects and thus failed to fully capture the curriculum expansion of the period.[25] A much longer listing of subjects and a more detailed report of findings characterized the 1922 survey and the subsequent surveys of 1928, 1934, 1949, 1961, and 1973, the last of the series.[26] Between 1922 and 1973, the number of distinct courses reported to the USOE rose from about 175 titles to over 2,100.[27] While it is impossible to sort out the extent to which this increase represented new courses or merely variations or elaborations on older themes, its magnitude makes it difficult to avoid the impression of curriculum expansion running amok.[28]

These surveys provide historians of the American high school with a series of increasingly detailed and trustworthy snapshots of high school course enrollments spanning the years from 1890 to 1973. In addition, researchers under contract to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) have gathered similar data, usually from student transcripts which can be linked to the earlier studies to provide a sweeping picture of high school curriculum development in the twentieth century. Unfortunately, these data have rarely been utilized by scholars in describing the modern history of secondary education generally or the high school curriculum specifically. Indeed, almost all of the works upon which the conventional wisdom rests have ignored these data completely.[29]

Table 1 presents the USOE data from 1928 to 1973 as well as data from a 1982 transcript study. It details changes in the *relative share* of high school course enrollments in different subject fields, compares the traditional academic subjects with non-academic subjects and includes the average number of courses taken per student for each survey year. Perhaps the most striking thing about this table is the degree to which it challenges the conventional account of sharp pendulum swings between the two opposing curricular poles. Contrary to the conventional picture of reform and counter-reform, these data reveal one long "pendulum swing" toward non-academic subjects that continues for almost four decades. Despite the fierce rhetorical battles about curriculum between the 1930s and the 1970s, for us the most impressive feature of these data is not change but constancy. The data reveal a steady drop in the academic share of subject enrollments that begins in 1928 and continues unabated until at least 1961. This drop includes a sharp decline in the study of foreign languages and more modest declines in mathematics and science. The growth of the non-academic share of the curriculum can be gauged by one startling fact: in 1910, the share of high school work devoted to *each* of the five basic academic subjects-- English, foreign language, mathematics, science, and history--enrolled more students than *all* of the non-academic subjects combined. Moreover, these data do not reveal the more subtle changes within academic subjects in which English courses were reorganized to relate "literature and life," and history and government courses were transformed into the social studies.[30] Finally, the decline in the share of academic subjects is offset by a huge increase in physical education enrollments between 1928 and 1934, an increase that continued steadily thereafter.

In addition to undercutting the swinging pendulum model of curriculum change, Table 1 challenges several other assumptions widely held by historians of the American high school. First, as we have argued elsewhere, high school curriculum changes were more rapid during the depression years than at any other period before or since. The drop in the academic share of course enrollments was steeper between 1928 and 1934 than at any other time. We believe the impetus for that change was the sharp slope of increase in high school enrollments, higher than in any previous period, and a significant shift in the social class makeup of the high school population. In addition, the drop in the academic share and the rise of non-academic "personal development" courses in the 1930s seems to indicate that the Life-Adjustment Movement did not initiate major curriculum changes but merely justified and rationalized trends that were already underway.[31]

Secondly, contrary to much recent historical interpretation, the relative decline in academic enrollments was not matched by increases in vocational enrollments, except perhaps, for the brief period of World War II. Rather, a large proportion of the curricular shift is accounted for by increases in such "personal development" courses as health, physical education, and driver's training.[32] We believe that this development was directly related to the negative assessment of both the academic *and* vocational abilities of the new waves of students entering the high schools in the 1930s and after the war. Curriculum theorists from this era, such as Harl R. Douglas routinely urged educators to design new programs to meet the needs of these new students, many of whom were "children of mediocre or inferior ability who lack interest in abstract and academic materials." What many historians fail to recognize, but the data in Table 1 indicate, is that these students were tracked away not only from academic courses but away from vocational courses as well.[33]

Thirdly, the declining share of academic courses and the growth of "personal development" courses continued unabated until at least 1961. In other words, it appears that the demands for increased academic course work during the Sputnik era debates had relatively little effect on overall student course-taking patterns. Lastly, it appears from Table 1 that all of these historic developments were reversed some time after 1961, a development that we will need to probe more deeply later.

Insert Table 1 about here.

The data in Table 1 seem to strongly support Arthur Bestor and other critics of the 1950s, who argued that the academic seriousness of the nation's high schools had been profoundly undercut since at least the late 1920s. Defenders of the high schools, on the other hand, routinely countered these arguments by pointing out that during the very period that the critics identified as the years of decline, the actual numbers of young people studying academic subjects rose dramatically. To take but one example, while 84 percent of high school students were enrolled in a foreign language course in 1910, this amounted to only 739,000 students. In 1949, the percentage had fallen to a mere 22 percent, but this was 1.2 million students. Table 2 displays the actual enrollments in the same subject fields over the same years as Table 1. Except for

Table 1

Percent Distribution of Subject Field Enrollments in U.S. Public Secondary Schools, Grades 9-12: 1928-1982

Subject Field	1928	1934	1949	1961	1973	1982
Academic						
English	19.1	18.6	18.4	17.9	20.1	19.9
Foreign Language	9.5	6.9	4.0	4.3	3.9	3.3
Mathematics	12.8	11.1	9.8	9.9	9.2	11.2
Science	10.6	10.1	9.7	9.3	10.0	9.4
Social Studies	15.2	15.5	17.4	15.6	16.2	16.9
Computers						0.4
Non-academic						
Industrial Arts	4.0	3.5	3.7	3.7	4.2	3.4
Trade and Industry	0.6	0.7	1.2	0.7	0.5	2.3
Home Economics	3.3	3.3	4.3	3.6	3.5	3.4
Business	11.4	11.3	10.5	8.9	6.8	6.7
Health and P.E.*	4.9	11.5	12.4	15.9	17.5	15.9
Music	5.2	5.0	5.4	6.6	4.7	3.1
Art	2.3	1.7	1.6	2.5	3.0	3.5
Agriculture	0.7	0.7	1.2	1.0	0.4	0.5
Other	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.2	
Academic	67.2	62.2	59.3	57.0	59.4	61.1
Non-academic	32.8	37.9	40.7	43.0	40.7	39.0
Enrollments per Student	5.02	5.09	5.61	6.42	7.00	6.97

* Includes Safety, Driver's Training and ROTC.

Sources: Recoded and adapted from USOE, *Biennial Survey, 1926-28*; USOE, *Offerings and Registrations, 1933-34*; USOE, *Biennial Survey, 1948-50*; Wright, *Subject Offerings, 1960-61*; Osterndorf and Horn, *Course Offerings, 1972-73*; West, Diodato, and Sandberg, *A Trend Study.*

foreign language, enrollments in *all* subject fields showed increases at every data collection point between 1928 and 1973, and even foreign language enrollments increased in every period but 1934 to 1949.[34]

Insert Table 2 about here

The two different perspectives on the same data in Tables 1 and 2 point up once more the sharp polarities in ways of viewing the purposes of the high school that we discussed in the preceding section. If, as the 1893 Committee of Ten supposed, certain subjects are of more value and more lasting value than others, and if these are the subjects represented above as academic, then long term declines in the *proportions* of students that are studying these subjects represent declines in educational quality and are matters of concern. But if, as the proponents of the Cardinal Principles seemed to be asserting, every increase in the numbers of students attending the high school also represents a significant decrease in the academic abilities of the student body then a proportionate shift *away* from the academic subjects is fully warranted.[35] In fact, from this perspective, this shift never seemed to be rapid enough or great enough to fully satisfy the "needs" of the expanding secondary school student body, and this seeming insatiability of demand for more and more courses explains why the critics of these trends were not much mollified by mere increases in enrollments in science, math, etc.

Yet, as John F. Latimer, one of the most perceptive critics of the high school in the 1950s, argued, focusing on the increase in numbers rather than the decrease in percentages is to accept a "split-level" education. Because educators believed that the majority of new students were less able than previous generations, they shunted them

Table 2

Subject Field Enrollments (in thousands) in U.S. Public Secondary Schools, Grades 9-12: 1928-1982

Subject Field	1928	1934	1949	1961	1973	1982
Total 9-12 Enrollment	2,897	4,497	5,399	8,219	13,438	12,661
Academic						
English	2,776	4,266	5,576	9,438	18,911	17,716
Foreign Language	1,377	1,575	1,200	2,293	3,659	2,953
Mathematics	1,859	2,532	2,958	5,224	8,608	9,850
Science	1,534	2,308	2,944	4,908	9,414	8,278
Social Studies	2,213	3,540	5,265	8,226	15,224	15,008
Computers						344
Non-academic						
Industrial Arts	285	798	1,127	1,944	3,921	2,980
Trade and Industry	92	158	369	365	484	1,874
Home Economics	477	750	1,305	1,901	3,249	3,024
Business	1,656	2,588	3,194	4,706	6,410	5,874
Health and P.E.	713	2,625	3,747	8,395	16,460	14,057
Music	754	1,149	1,625	3,473	4,461	2,733
Art	340	394	486	1,335	2,795	3,061
Agriculture	106	159	364	505	346	420
Other	62	38	124	91	103	80

Sources: Same as in Table 1.

into less challenging courses rather than searching for new and more effective ways to teach these students traditional academic subjects. This belief shaped the direction of most high school curriculum reform since the 1930s and undergirded the Life-Adjustment Movement. As Table 2 reveals, while academic course enrollments increased, so did enrollments in less rigorous non-academic courses, courses that proponents of greater academic rigor did not think should be in the curriculum at all.

The terms of the debate about the high school curriculum, however, sharply altered in the early 1970s when high school enrollment growth slowed and finally began to drop in 1976. Instead of the constant enrollment increases in all subjects which served to soften the claims of those who decried the "decline" in academic course-taking, we now see enrollment declines in nearly all subject fields. At the same time, however, the long-running drop in the academic share of course-taking was reversed, and by 1982, even before *A Nation At Risk* appeared, the academic share had recovered to about the level of the mid-1930s (See Table 1). Under these conditions, the debate takes on a new urgency, and the question of *proportionate* enrollments, as contrasted to numerical increases, again becomes relevant.

Table 3 highlights what happened when the nation's aggregate high school enrollment reached its peak in 1976 and began to decline. This table displays the percentage of all students in grades 9 through 12 who were actually enrolled in, for example, an English or a mathematics course during each data collection year from 1928 to 1982.[36] Looked at in this way, some of the trends are consistent with those mentioned earlier, for example, the rise in enrollments in health and physical education, but others appear to be quite different. This table shows a clear effect of the 1950s concern over science, math, and foreign language. Not only did the numbers of high school students enrolled in these fields increase, but so did the proportion of students.[37] Surprisingly, however, the growth in actual percentage enrollments in these subjects slowed over the next decade, the very period in which the new math and science curriculum designs sponsored by the National Science Foundation were being implemented in many of the nation's high schools.[38]

Another trend that appears in Table 3 suggests that the Career Education Movement of the Nixon years was quite effective. This movement was aimed at strengthening the vocational preparation function of the schools and focusing the attention of young people on the "world of work." It shows in these data as a dramatic increase in the proportion of high schoolers enrolled in courses in the Trade and Industry category, from around 4 percent to over 15 percent in less than a decade. Part of this was a shift of the orientation of courses from non-vocational industrial arts and home economics to courses with a specific vocational orientation; but even when these three fields are combined, there was still an increase from a total of 57 percent of students enrolled in 1973 to 63 percent in 1982.

Insert Table 3 about here

One other point to note about the trends in Table 3 is the increase in the proportion of students enrolled in courses in English and social studies. We believe these are only apparent increases, artifacts of the way the USOE data were tabulated and displayed. As they are presented in Tables 1-3, every course enrollment, regardless of the length of the course, is counted as a unit. This means, for example, that a high school which offers a series of one semester English courses such as American Literature and British Literature will appear to have twice the enrollments in English of a high school which offers only year-long courses such as English 1, English 2, English 3, and English 4. In the above tables, then, subject fields in which many year-long courses have been divided into semester-long or shorter courses with

Table 3

Percent of High School Students (Grades 9-12) Enrolled in Subject Fields: 1949, 1961, 1973, 1982, 1987

Subject Field	1928	1934	1949	1961	1973	1982
Academic						
English	95.8	94.9	103.3	114.8	140.7	139.0
Foreign Language	47.5	35.0	22.2	27.9	27.2	23.3
Mathematics	64.2	56.3	54.8	63.6	64.1	77.8
Science	53.0	51.3	54.5	59.7	66.3	65.4
Social Studies	76.4	78.8	97.5	100.1	113.6	118.0
Computer Science						2.7
Non-academic						
Industrial Arts	20.2	17.8	20.9	23.6	29.2	23.5
Trade and Industry	3.2	3.5	6.8	4.4	3.6	15.7
Home Economics	16.5	16.7	24.2	23.4	23.1	23.9
Business	57.2	57.6	59.2	57.3	47.7	46.4
Health and P.E.	24.6	58.4	69.4	102.1	122.5	111.0
Music	26.0	25.5	30.1	42.3	33.2	21.6
Art	11.7	8.6	9.0	16.2	20.8	24.2
Agriculture	3.7	3.5	6.7	6.1	2.6	3.3
Other	2.1	0.9	2.3	1.1	0.8	1.5

Sources: Same as in Table 1

different titles, such as English and social studies, will be shown to have somewhat exaggerated enrollments compared to fields, such as foreign language and mathematics, which have seen less development along this dimension. This is also the most likely explanation of the increase in course enrollments per student shown in Table 1. Rather than assume that students in 1973 were taking 40 percent more courses than students in 1928, it is far more likely that 20 percent of year-long courses had been split into semester-long offerings over those forty-five years.

Table 4 illustrates the ratios of year-long courses to semester-long or shorter courses in the fourteen subject fields for 1960-61 and 1972-73. It not only shows a significant shift toward shorter courses over the decade of the 1960s, but also illustrates that this development was quite uneven across the subject fields, with English and social studies leading the way in the academic subjects and home economics and health and physical education leading in the non-academic subjects.

Insert Table 4 about here.

Another way to "control" for this distortion is to consider changes in credits, rather than course enrollments.[39] A data array based on these measures would partly rectify the distortion just described, since half-year courses in basic subjects receive only half the credit of full-year courses. Furthermore, they provide two additional clues to curriculum change, (1) whether the assignment of credit for particular subjects has changed over time, and (2) just what courses the "average" student or selected students have studied over the course of a four-year high school education. Data of this kind have been supplied by a series of studies of the transcripts of various cohorts of graduating seniors.[40]

Table 4

Ratios of Enrollments in Year-Long Courses to Enrollments in Semester-Long or Shorter Courses by Subject Fields in U.S. Public Secondary Schools, Grades 9-12: 1960, 1972

Subject	1960	1972
Academic		
English	93/7	63/37
Foreign Language	100/0	95/5
Mathematics	90/10	91/9
Science	97/3	89/11
Social Studies	81/19	58/42
Non-academic		
Industrial Arts	78/22	67/33
Trade and Industry	90/10	81/19
Home Economics	84/16	49/51
Business	88/12	75/25
Health and P.E.	75/25	59/41
Music	100/0	79/21
Art	68/32	66/34
Agriculture	96/4	89/11

Sources: Wright, *Subject Offerings*; Osterndorf and Horn, *Course Offerings*.

The first of these transcript studies was done by the USOE in 1958 at the height of the national anxiety over the launching of Sputnik. The most recent which we are able to report was sponsored by the NCES in 1987 and was designed to check the impact on high school course-taking patterns of *A Nation at Risk*. These and other transcript data are displayed in Table 5. One point to note is that, by credits, the academic share of the distribution is considerably greater than the academic share of courses enrollments, but, as we suspected, the shares represented by English and social studies are smaller. In the more recent data, differences between the distribution of credits and the distribution of course enrollments narrow considerably. We believe this is because it was common in the 1940s and 1950s for high schools to grant no credit or only partial academic credit for courses in health, physical education, and music while by the 1970s it had become common to grant full academic credit for such courses.[41] This is also the most likely explanation for the increase in the average total credits attained by students between 1958 and 1982. Rather than assume that high schools lengthened their school days or otherwise required more total course work on the part of students, it is more likely that they have increasingly granted credit for formerly non-credit activities. Clifford Adelman, whose study of changes between 1969 and the mid-1970s actually controlled for differences between schools in the length of periods, also noted what he called "a devaluation of time in the academic curriculum" resulting from "conscious decisions to raise the amount of credit for non-academic courses or to mandate wholly new courses in the secondary curriculum within the same total amount of school time."[42]

Insert Table 5 about here

Whether one considers credit distribution or enrollment distribution, the trends are the same. But the two views suggest different conclusions about when the low

Table 5

Percent Distribution of Credits Earned by High School Graduates by Subject Field, 1958-1987. [Corrected as of 5/5/93]

Subject Field	1958	1969	1973	1976-81	1982	1987
Academic						
English	24.2	20.3	18.4	18.8	17.9	17.5
Foreign Language	6.0	5.8	4.8	3.6	4.9	6.3
Mathematics	12.7	12.7	10.6	11.5	12.0	12.9
Science	11.7	11.2	12.1	10.6	10.3	11.3
Social Studies	18.9	16.5	16.5	15.4	14.6	14.5
Computer Science	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.5	1.7
Non-academic						
Industrial Arts	3.2	1.9	0.7	2.1	6.1	5.0
Trade and Industry	0.4	5.2	5.4	5.3	3.1	2.7
Home Economics	4.0	1.3	3.8	2.6	4.8	4.0
Business	8.5	7.3	7.7	8.5	4.1	3.4
Health and P.E.	4.4	9.1	11.6	10.5	9.1	8.6
Music	2.3	2.5	4.6	3.3		
Art	1.1	1.9	3.2	1.6	6.5	6.2
Agriculture	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.7	0.8	0.7
Other	2.1	4.1	0.1	5.5	5.4	5.0
Academic	73.5	65.5	62.4	59.9	60.2	64.2
Non-academic	26.7	33.5	37.7	40.1	39.9	35.6
Average Credits per Graduate	15.54	NA	NA	NA	21.23	23.01

Sources: Adapted by the authors from Greer and Harbeck, *What High School Pupils Study*; Adelman, "Devaluation" ; Osterndorf and Horn, *Course Offerings*; Westat, *Tabulations*.

point in academic enrollments was reached. Based on enrollments, the nadir is reached some time between 1961 and 1973, with respect to credits, it seems to be reached some time in the late 1970s. Possible reasons for this difference, as mentioned earlier, are the reorganization of full-year courses into courses of a half-year or less, the increase of mandated requirements in such non-academic fields as health and physical education, and the granting of full academic credit toward graduation for such courses.

In all, despite the variety of interpretations of these data, several tentative conclusions seem warranted. First, it is quite clear that the proportion of the high school curriculum claimed by the academic subjects, whether measured by course enrollments or credits, declined significantly from the late 1920s until some time in the late 1960s or early 1970s. The available data do not permit us to date the low point of academic enrollment share more precisely. Second, it is equally clear that, up to at least 1976, both the total numbers of students and the proportion of students taking courses in academic subjects increased, except for foreign languages. The same can be said of the non-academic subjects, and there is the rub. Whether one is dismayed or cheered by these contrasting perspectives on course enrollments depends entirely on one's view of the purpose of secondary education. For those who believe that the primary purpose of the school is to educate youth "with equal seriousness in the great areas of human knowledge," the curriculum changes of the middle fifty years of this century were a disaster. For those who see the school as responsible for meeting a wide range of youth "needs" and problems, as well as for "developing social and civic awareness and responsibility," the picture until recently has been much brighter. This, of course, is the long-running debate we have described throughout this essay. What, if anything, do the data have to say about the specifics of this debate?

Perhaps the most intriguing finding here is that neither the Life-Adjustment Movement nor the "conservative" reaction to it in the 1950s appear to have had the profound impacts on the high school curriculum usually attributed to them. Instead, the changes over the period from 1934 to 1961 seem to us to be a slow working out in practice of a basic educational philosophy which was in place long before either of these reform movements were set in motion. That philosophy asserts that the high school curriculum should be based on an analysis of the "needs" of the students who attend it. Over the long period of enrollment increase, it was assumed that each "new" group to enter the high school represented a distinct set of different needs. In this view, then, enrollment expansion always requires curriculum expansion. Even when voices have been raised to challenge the needs-based approach to curriculum, as during the Sputnik era, the school has responded by identifying that group *within* the student body for whom it felt the proposed reforms were appropriate, i.e. in that particular case, gifted and talented children. This explains why the late 1950s reforms did not constitute a "profound shift in thinking about education" that "refocused on subject matter and intellectual discipline," but rather were both modest and short-lived.[43]

While the Life-Adjustment Movement and the conservative reaction appear to be less potent than historians have claimed, the Career Education Movement and the Excellence Movement of the 1970s and 1980s appear to have been considerably more effective than previously realized. Career Education resulted in a very large increase in the share of high school students enrolled in courses in Trade and Industry between 1973 and 1982. The Excellence Movement, while considerably more complex, seems clearly to have had the result of reversing the very long trend toward non-academic education, and to have restored the academic share of course-taking to about its 1930 level. Importantly, this reversal began well before *A Nation at Risk*, though this report appears to have given considerable stimulus to it. Obviously, we have no way to know whether or not this "excellence" trend will be as short-lived as the one twenty-five years ago.

Finally, the data reveal at least two trends that historians have not discussed at all--the tremendous increase in school time and credit devoted to health and physical education and the decline of business or commercial courses. The conventional view of physical education enrollments has been that they rise after every war in which the nation is involved, since wars and the draft demonstrate the low levels of physical condition of the American population. The data suggest otherwise--that enrollments in physical education have been rising unremittingly since the 1930s. Historians have described the business curriculum as the most popular and effective segment of vocational education, particularly for young women, but they have not followed its development beyond the 1930s. The USOE data show that both the business share of the curriculum and the percentage of students enrolled in business courses declined quite sharply between 1934 and 1949, leveled off for about two decades, then began another sharp decline.

These tentative conclusions are based largely on a macro-view of the high school curriculum, shifts in nationally aggregated enrollments between broad subject families. To understand more completely the interaction between curriculum reform movements on the one hand and changes in the course-taking behavior of high school students on the other we need a finer grained analysis. For this, we turn to a more detailed look at two subject fields, science and mathematics.

Changes in Science and Mathematics
Course-Taking, 1949-1987

Since World War II, the subject fields of math and science have come in for special consideration, both from the participants in the great curriculum debates and from USOE staffers. During the Sputnik era debates, enrollments and achievement levels in math and science were of particular concern, and the National Defense

Education Act provided substantial funds for the improvement of teaching and educational resources in these specific fields. The efforts of the National Science Foundation to get university professors involved in the development of new curriculum materials and approaches were aimed primarily, though not exclusively, at these subjects. More than twenty-five years later, *A Nation at Risk* also focused considerable attention on math and science as areas of crucial importance for the country's future economic competitiveness. Today, Goal Four of the National Goals continues this trend by calling for American students to be first in the world in these subject fields.

The U.S.Office of Education has reflected the national concern for developments in science and math and this has resulted in more frequent and vigorous efforts to track enrollment and other changes in these subjects than in other fields. The office's activities actually began much earlier than most historians have supposed. In 1948, concurrent with its endorsement of the Life-Adjustment Movement, the office carried out a small scale national survey of the teaching of science in public high schools. This was followed by a similar survey of mathematics teaching in 1952 and joint surveys of math and science in 1954, 1956, 1958, and 1962. From its general survey of courses enrollments in 1961, the office calculated a select survey of math and science offerings. In addition, tables on math and science enrollments continued to be published in the *Digest of Educational Statistics* until at least 1965.[44]

Two different rationales provided the impetus for this USOE series of studies. As the President's National Committee for the Development of Scientists and Engineers put it,

> As our society depends increasingly on science and technology, it is important that all citizens have an understanding of the nature of science and mathematics. The continued security and growth of the United States in this age of technology require steady increases for many years to come in the Nation's supply of high quality engineers, scientists, and teachers of mathematics and the sciences.[45]

These rationales, the need for greater scientific literacy in the general population and the need for an increasing supply of scientists, engineers, and mathematicians, have continued to dominate debate about science and mathematics in the high schools to this day. But encouraging enrollments in science and mathematics courses can have a number of different outcomes. For example, if it is desirable that all American high school students take three years of mathematics, does it matter whether the three years consist of general math, consumer math and remedial math or algebra, geometry, and trigonometry? And if it matters, how can reformers be certain to produce the second pattern rather than the first? More importantly for our purposes here, given the evidence presented in Table 3, that math and science enrollments rose as a consequence of the late 1950s back-to-basics movement and appear to be rising again in the 1980s, how are these increases distributed within the subject fields?

The data displayed in Tables 6,7 and 8 permit us to address this last question by focusing closely on enrollment changes within the two subject fields.[46] Table 6 which lists the percentage of students in grades 9-12 enrolled in science and math courses between 1948 and 1963 highlights the increases in these two subject areas that took place during these years. Overall math enrollment rates rose from about 55 percent of those in grades 9-12 in 1948 to about two-thirds in 1963. Gains in science were more modest. There were large increases in the number of students and even in the *rates* of enrollment in such rigorous courses as algebra, geometry, trigonometry, biology, chemistry, and physics. The most dramatic increases, however, were not in the most rigorous courses but in the so-called "practical" courses. As the author of the report comparing 1948 to 1960 noted,

> Courses of a practical nature in everyday living continued to proliferate. . . . In mathematics, such courses as consumer mathematics, economic mathematics, mathematics for modern living, refresher mathematics, and terminal mathematics were reported. Science offered household biology, science for modern living, everyday physics, and consumer science, among others."[47]

Insert Table 6 about here.

In other words, science and math enrollments reveal the same trend toward an increasingly "split-level" education that we described in the previous section. Increases in enrollments in the rigorous science and math courses were matched and even outpaced by increases in less intellectually challenging courses. Why did this development not set off a cry of alarm in the U.S.Office of Education, which appeared to be attending closely to enrollment shifts and to be a leader in the call for a larger supply of scientists and engineers?

Careful reading of the reports of those years reveals an agency that was far more concerned with training an elite corps of scientists and mathematicians than improving scientific literacy throughout the general population. Furthermore, the office fully accepted the premise that algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and calculus were appropriate subjects for *some* students, but inappropriate for others. There was little genuine concern for the role of science and math in the general education of a

Table 6

Percentage of Students, Grades 9-12, Enrolled in Science and Mathematics Courses: 1948-1963

Subject Field	1948-9	1954-5	1958-9	1960-1	1962-63
Mathematics	54.7	55.5	65.2	63.9	67.0
General Math	12.0	12.2	13.1	17.4	12.1
Elem. Algebra	19.3	18.3	22.6	19.6	21.2
Plane Geometry	11.1	13.6	12.5	11.7	14.5
Interm. Algebra	6.9	6.6	8.2	9.0	10.1
Solid Geometry	1.7	2.2	1.4	2.1	0.7
Trigonometry	2.0	2.6	2.8	3.0	2.0
All Other Math	1.7	NA	4.6	1.1	6.4
Science	54.5	NA	59.6	59.7	59.9
General Science	19.9	NA	20.2	22.2	18.2
Biology	18.4	19.7	21.4	21.7	24.7
Chemistry	7.6	7.3	8.4	9.1	8.5
Physics	5.4	4.6	4.8	4.9	4.0
All Other Science	3.2	NA	4.8	1.8	4.5

Sources: 1948 is from USOE, *Biennial Survey, 1948-50;* 1960 is from Wright, *Subject Offerings*; 1954, 1958, 1962 are from Simon and Grant, *Digest of Educational Statistics: 1965 Edition*, p. 27.

citizen.[48] Indeed, rather than supporting the efforts of such critics as Bestor to bring more rigor into high school education, the tone of the reports was more critical of the critics than of the high schools. The 1952 report acknowledged that "Enrollments in mathematics for general education have increased, but the enrollments in the college-preparatory mathematics has not kept pace with the growth of the high schools," but the office failed to keep abreast of this development, not even reporting the large increases in the teaching of remedial math between 1952 and 1972.[49] The office clearly endorsed the principle of the split-level curriculum, and this principle continued to hold sway in subsequent decades.

The massive USOE and NSF curriculum projects of the 1960s provide an excellent case in point. Developed in the wake of the Sputnik scare, the National Science Foundation set out to develop new and more challenging curricula in the sciences, mathematics, foreign languages and the social studies. Mainly taking the form of new teaching materials designed to replace traditional textbooks, these experimental approaches were adopted by many high schools in the early 1960s. Despite the substantial amounts of money spent on these projects and the publicity they received, the NSF projects boosted enrollments only modestly at best, and they appear to have had no lasting impact.[50]

At the same time that high schools showed modest increases in some of the more rigorous math courses, they also showed increases at the other end of the difficulty spectrum, in the remedial and applied mathematics categories. In the sciences, modest declines in chemistry and physics were offset by increases in lower-level general science courses such as physical science and earth/space science. Indeed, the authors of the report that considered curricular changes from 1960 to 1972 noted, "Although traditional academic courses still receive considerable emphasis, their prominence in the school curriculum has been noticeably eroded since the 1960-61 data were collected."[51]

This trend was partially caused by the shift in national priorities in the 1960s from the Cold War demands for more scientists and engineers to preoccupations with domestic social problems such as poverty and inequalities. During the decade of the 1960s, the attention of educators and policy-makers alike turned away from the "needs of the talented few" to the needs of the disadvantaged child and the potential dropout. But the trend was also caused by the way in which the high schools adopted the NSF curricula. Schools targeted these curricula toward the high-performing, college-bound students who probably would have taken all the advanced mathematics and science courses the school offered regardless of the curriculum revisions.

As we argued in the previous section, the most important factor shaping the curriculum in this period was the continued growth of high school enrollments--from 8.2 million in 1960 to 13.4 million in 1972. Educators responded to these students as they had in the past by assuming that increased enrollments inevitably meant increasing numbers of low-ability students. Believing that these students weren't capable of mastering difficult course material, educators expanded the less-demanding general track and created less rigorous courses for these students. Thus, whether one looks at the humanities, the sciences or mathematics, the dominant trend was toward rising enrollments and less challenging classes. As the authors of the report comparing 1960 to 1972 stated,

> The emphasis on making a high school education available for every youth, as noted in the [1960-61] study, has continued, with added attention given to the lower ability groups. . . . Remedial courses were offered to one segment of the student population; another segment had access to advanced and college-level courses. . . Graduation requirements were relaxed in many schools, and elective courses became more prominent.[52]

Insert Table 7 about here.

These trends continued over the next decade. Enrollment rates in both science and mathematics showed sizable gains, a 12 percent increase in the overall science enrollment rate and a more than 40 percent increase in mathematics. However, in both fields these increases were concentrated in lower-level courses. The non-college preparatory mathematics courses showed over three times the gains of the college preparatory sequence, and in science, except for biology, the gains were mostly in general science courses (See tables 7 and 8). It appears that while the high schools were responding to the back-to-basics pressure for increased academic course work, they did so in a time-honored fashion, designing new courses with academic titles geared to students of middling or low attainments. Over this same period of rising enrollments in science and mathematics, some studies showed a drift from the academic curriculum into the general curriculum.[53] Achievement test scores continued to decline, even for the college-bound student.[54]

Insert Table 8 about here.

During the most recent period for which data are available, 1982-1987, enrollment rates in both science and mathematics continued to increase, but the pattern of these increases has been sharply different from previous increases. Science increased at a faster rate than over previous years. Math increased as well, but at a slower rate. By far the most striking aspects of these changes, however, are the increases in the traditional academic courses--biology, chemistry and physics; algebra,

Table 7

Comparisons of Changes in Mathematics Course-Taking in U.S. High Schools, 1961-1987

	% of 9-12 enrollment		% of 9-12 enrollment		% of graduates receiving credit	
	1960-61	1972-73	1972-73	1978-82	1982	1987
College-Preparatory Mathematics	46.5	45.5	40.2	49.8	195.1	250.7
Pre-Algebra	0.0	0.4	0.2	4.3	13.2	13.5
Algebra, Elem.	19.6	15.3	11.2	18.1	66.6	76.8
Algebra, Int.	9.0	8.9	8.3	7.1	31.0	46.1
Advncd. Alg./Trig.	0.8	4.9	4.8	1.9	12.3	11.4
Geometry	13.8	11.5	11.6	11.4	45.9	56.2
Trigonometry	3.0	1.5	1.4	1.6	7.4	11.6
Advanced Math*	0.3	2.5	2.2	4.3	15.7	27.8
Computer Math	0.0	0.5	0.5	1.1	3.0	7.3
Non-College Preparatory Mathematics	17.4	18.5	15.0	28.2	71.0	63.3
General Math	17.4	17.3	13.8	21.7	52.0	42.6
Applied Math	0.0	0.9	0.9	3.7	11.0	8.9
Consumer Math	0.0	0.3	0.3	2.8	7.9	11.9
Total Mathematics	63.9	64.0	55.3	77.8	267.5	314.0

* Includes Analysis, Functions, College Mathematics, Probability and Statistics, Calculus, and combinations of these.

Sources: 1960-1 and 1972-3 derived from Wright, *Subject Offerings* and Osterndorf and Horn, *Offerings and Enrollments*; 1972-3 and 1978-82 are derived from West, Diodata, and Sandberg, *Trends*; 1982 and 1987 are derived from Westat, *Tabulations* and represent the percentages of students in two graduating cohorts who received credit in these courses. These last two columns include private school students, since it was not possible to adjust the figures at this level of detail.

Table 8

Comparisons of Changes in Natural Science Course-Taking in U.S. High Schools, 1961-1987

	% of 9-12 enrollment		% of 9-12 enrollment		% of graduates receiving credit	
	1960-61	1972-73	1972-73	1978-82	1982	1987
General Science	18.8	8.8	5.3	14.5		
Biology	21.7	24.1	19.5	25.3	95.4	113.5
Chemistry	9.1	7.7	8.6	7.6	35.5	49.7
Physics	4.9	3.4	2.9	1.0	16.2	21.5
Chemistry and Physics, Advanced		0.1	0.1	2.3		
Physical Science	3.4	7.6	6.0	8.5	29.9	35.8
Earth/Space Science	1.0	6.6	4.5	4.9	16.2	15.9
Applied Science		0.9	0.8	0.3	1.6	3.5
Other General Science		6.8	3.3	0.6	30.1	23.2
Other Specific Science	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.4	3.0	2.1
NSF & Other Special Programs			7.2			
Total Science	59.7	66.3	58.4	65.4	227.9	265.1

Sources: Same as in Table 7.

geometry, trigonometry, and advanced mathematics. Moreover, enrollment rates in general science courses, particularly earth/space science, seem to be on the wane.

Certainly much of this change can be attributed to more rigorous state-mandated graduation requirements that began in the early 1980s.[55] However, we believe two other factors were equally, if not more important. First, reformers in the 1980s, in contrast to many of those of the Sputnik era, appear to have taken seriously the need for greater scientific literacy in the general population. Second, insofar as these reformers have also been concerned with increasing the pool of potential scientists and engineers, they have stressed the need to include women and members of minority groups in that pool. As long as these ideas hold sway, it is unlikely that the nation's high schools will be able to "subvert" or "contain" the reforms as they have in the past, by sharply differentiating between the academic courses made available for bright, college-bound students and the "academic" courses designed for the general track or the perceived low-ability student.

Indeed, these data appear to indicate that in the past decade a profound shift has taken place in terms of both the rhetoric of educational reform and student course-taking patterns. Where once equal educational opportunity was conceived as access to a broad range of differentiated curriculum options, an idea promoted by educators but shared by virtually all major public and private policy agencies including the U.S.Office of Education, there is now more talk of "equalizing access to tough, academic courses," and of *all* high schools offering a rigorous "core" program of those academic courses that used to be thought of as college-preparatory. If this shift in thinking takes firmer hold, reaches more deeply into the ranks of high school administrators, counselors and teachers, and continues to influence course-taking patterns, it will constitute by far the most significant shift in educational values and behaviors since the 1930s. It will also represent the ultimate vindication of the Committee of Ten.

Conclusions

In 1893, the Committee of Ten asserted a vision of democratic education and of educational equality that challenged the high schools of their time--every high school student whether bound for college or not, should follow a serious and rigorous course of study in those subjects which have proven to have lasting value in the development of our civilization. This idea did not prevail. Instead a very different definition of democracy and a different idea of equality took hold--that a democratic education allows students to study whatever they choose and that equality consists of providing an education appropriate to each student's needs, abilities, and future destiny.

We believe that the data presented here on the long term trends in the course-taking behaviors of American high school students illustrates the total dominance of this second set of definitions. Rather than the history of the high school being a long tug-of-war between these two conceptions, with occasional victories on either side, as many historians have suggested, we see instead a slow but steady working out of the ideas first clearly enunciated in the *Cardinal Principles of Secondary Education*. The high school curriculum that we have, or at least had until the mid-1980s, is an amalgam of the outcomes of struggles between interest groups over control of educational policy, of the various analyses of adolescent "needs" that curriculum experts have produced from time to time and of the choices and demands that students and their parents have made. It is not the consequence of a rational analysis of what knowledge will best create an enlightened citizenry educated on an equal footing.

The retreat from the ideal of the Committee of Ten has taken many forms. Most obviously, the share of course-taking represented by the academic subjects drastically declined relative to the non-academic subjects. Even within the category of academic courses, curriculum developers have given primary attention to offerings which would appeal to less able students rather than challenge the intellect. Moreover, there has been a steady trend toward courses of shorter duration and a general erosion of the notion of cumulation in learning--that the study of one subject requires prior and successful study of another. The devaluation of the coinage of academic credit is fully evident in the granting of credit for courses that were once non-credit or even extra-curricular. Where the Committee of Ten recommendations sought to acknowledge the *relative* importance of subjects by varying the number of periods per week, this has proven too complicated for the modern high school, which constructs the schedule around the assumption of equal worth, equal time (5 periods per week), and equal weight for all subjects.

Our analysis of the many reports on student course-taking has indicated that the grip of this educational ideology *may* have weakened since the mid-1980s. Serious attention is being given to the old idea that *all* students should follow the same curriculum, whatever their career goals may be, and that to fail to require this is to deny equal educational opportunity. Supporters of this notion do not deny that there are educationally relevant differences between individuals in interests and abilities. But they argue that such differences should challenge educators to explore a host of alternative instructional methods and approaches rather than adopt the long-standing policy of split-level education. They do assert forthrightly that some subjects are inherently more important than others.[56]

This seems to be the chief significance of the National Goals, particularly Goals Three and Four. Goal Three places English, mathematics, science, history and geography on a level of importance somewhat higher than driver's training and personal typing, something high schools have generally failed to do. Furthermore, in the assertion that "all students [will] learn to use their minds so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning and productive employment," the operative word is *and*. Formerly high schools represented these three aims with three different curricular tracks, the general, the academic, and the vocational, respectively, and assumed that their job was to get the right students into the right tracks. What might it mean to prepare *all* students for all three roles?

Another significance of Goal Three is its reference to students leaving "grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency." In one stroke, this goal asserts both the need to have strong vertical articulation in the curriculum between different grade levels and the need to define the grades in terms of competencies rather than merely "time-in-grade."

Goal Four may be equally revolutionary in calling for an international standard of performance. American high school educators have never doubted that our high schools are the best in the world. They are the best because they are the most "democratic"; i.e. they enroll a larger share of the secondary school age population than any country in the world and they have achieved this because they have recognized that different adolescents have different curricular needs. Such thinking helped get the high schools through the 1950s without fundamental change, but it may not survive the 1980s and 1990s. We now know that several countries which have so far rejected the concept of the differentiated high school curriculum have actually attained higher enroilment rates than ours.[57] The process of international comparison, while not likely to result in the actual attainment of Goal Four, will nevertheless force us to continually reexamine some of the most cherished ideas in American educational history. One of these is surely the idea that the only way to approach universal secondary school enrollment is to make the high school curriculum less challenging and more entertaining.

While the adoption of the National Goals and the broad support they have received are encouraging, and while the data show clear signs of a significant reversal of the long trend, there are reasons to fear that the change might not be as profound and long-lasting as we would hope. First, the long declines in achievement scores recorded by the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the SAT and the ACT have shown little reversal, despite the apparent increase in the taking of pre-college math and science courses by high school students. Second, as in the 1950s, students may be taking unchallenging courses with academic titles, possibly explaining the low test scores. Increases in state-mandated graduation requirements, in themselves, do not guarantee that students will be seriously engaged or that required subjects will be well taught.

Third, and most importantly, the most widely publicized and discussed educational reform initiatives of this decade--school choice, school-based management, politically controlled local school councils, the creation of schools committed to religious and racial fundamentalism--threaten to weaken the revolutionary potential of the National Goals. All of these assert the primacy of the particular over the universal. All argue for greater rather than less diversity in school offerings. If left unchecked by external constraints on curriculum-building, they all have the potential to exacerbate the curriculum fragmentation that has characterized the very essence of the modern American high school.

The most powerful external constraint we can conceive would be the adoption of either a national curriculum or a clear set of national performance standards and assessment. Such a constraint would bring an important change to testing, since students would be tested on what they had been taught, thus making education more accountable. It would make it more difficult for educators to subvert reforms, as they have in the past, by demanding clear performance standards instead of merely requiring a particular set of courses. It would set a framework within which local experimentation in such areas as governance or teaching methods could proceed without endangering important national priorities. Finally, it might end the mockery that American high schools have made of the concept of equal educational opportunity.

Notes

[1] Bernard Weinraub, "Bush and Governors Set Goals" *The New York Times* 9/29/89, p. A10.

[2] U.S. Department of Education, *America 2000: An Education Strategy* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 1991), p. 3.

[3] We focus on developments on the high school level for several reasons. First, there is widespread agreement that secondary education is the most troubled part of the American educational enterprise. Second, almost all of the major curriculum reform movements in the last half century have sought to transform secondary rather than elementary education. Third, for almost 70 years a variety of federal agencies have been collecting data on course taking by high school students. These data, though seldom utilized for this purpose, permit in-depth analyses of curricular changes over precisely the time periods in which the high school has been most under fire.

[4] Arthur Powell, Eleanor Farrar and David K. Cohen, *The Shopping Mall High School: Winners and Losers in the Educational Marketplace* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985), pp. 241-2. For excerpts from these reports see David B. Tyack, *Turning Points in American Educational History* (Waltham, MA: Blaisdell Publishing Co., 1967), pp. 380-6, 396-400.

[5] John Latimer, *What's Happened To Our High Schools*, (Washington DC: Public Affairs Press, 1958), p. 117.

[6] Robert L. Church and Michael W. Sedlak, *Education in the United States* (New York: The Free Press, 1976), pp. 288-314; Edward A. Krug, *The Shaping of the American High School, 1880-1920* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), pp. 378-406; Diane Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade: American Education, 1945-1980* (New York: Basic Books, 1983), pp. 47-51.

[7] Edward A. Krug, *The Shaping of the American High School, 1920-1941* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1972), pp. 68-146; David B. Tyack, *The One Best System* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974).

[8] Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade*, pp. 52-64.

[9] Robert Hampel, *The Last Little Citadel: American High Schools Since 1940* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986), pp. 35-42; Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade*, pp. 64-9; Steven E. Tozer, Paul C. Violas, and Guy Senese, *School and Society: Educational Practice as Social Experience* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1992), pp. 196-7.

[10] The Prosser Resolution is quoted in Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade*, pp. 64-5. See also, Lawrence Cremin, *The Transformation of the School* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), pp. 332-8.

[11] Church and Sedlak, *Education*, p. 404.

[12] Smith is quoted in Cremin, *Transformation*, p. 340. Arthur Bestor, *Educational Wastelands: The Retreat from Learning in Our Public Schools* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, [1953], 1985), p. 10.

[13] Church and Sedlak, *Education*, pp. 404-7; Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade*, pp. 69-80; Joel Spring, *The Sorting Machine: National Educational Policy Since 1945* (New York: David McKay, Inc., 1976), pp. 15-37.

[14] Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade*, p. 229; Spring, *The Sorting Machine*, pp. 96-127; James B. Conant, *The American High School Today* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1959); Tozer, et al, *School and Society:*, pp. 199-203. Church and Sedlak, *Education*, pp. 407-17.

[15] Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade*, p. 235.

[16] A.S. Neill, *Summerhill: A Radical Approach to Child Rearing* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1960); Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade*, pp. 235-45.

[17] Charles Silberman, *Crisis in the Classroom: The Remaking of American Education* (New York: Random House, 1970); Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade*, pp. 245-55; Powell, et al, *The Shopping Mall*, pp. 296-99.

[18] Ravitch, *The Troubled Crusade*, pp. 255-6, 263-6; Tozer, et al, *School and Society:*, pp. 371-2.

[19] Marland is quoted in Spring, *The Sorting Machine*, p. 234. See also pp. 233-36.

[20] National Commission on Excellence in Education, *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1983), p. 5.

[21] Quoted in Staff of the National Commission on Excellence in Education, *Meeting the Challenge: Recent Efforts to Improve Education Across the Nation* (Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Education, November 15, 1983), p. 1.

[22] Tozer, et al, *School and Society:*, pp. 368-83. Studies that made recommendations for improving American education include Ernest L. Boyer, *High School: A Report on Secondary Education in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1983); John I. Goodlad, *A Place Called School* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1984); Powell, et al, *The Shopping Mall*; Theodore R. Sizer, *Horace's Compromise* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984); The Twentieth Century Fund, *Making the Grade* (1983); The Education Commission of the States, *Action for Excellence* (1983); National Science Board Commission on Precollege Education in Mathematics, Science, and Technology, *Educating Americans for the 21st Century* (1983).

[23] Tozer, et al, *School and Society:*, p. 378; James B. Stedman and K. Forbis Jordan, *Education Reform Reports: Content and Impact*, Report No. 86-56 EPW (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 1986), pp. 12-41.

[24] Hampel, *The Last Little Citadel*, p. 177; but see also Latimer, *What's Happened?* and Powell, et al, *The Shopping Mall*, ch. 5.

[25] For example, no enrollments were listed for such subjects as physical education and typewriting, and when these subjects first appeared in the reports in 1922, their enrollments were already greater than for many of the earlier-established subjects. See R.B.Stout, *The Development of High-School Curriculum in the North Central States from 1860 to 1918* (Chicago: Department of Education, University of Chicago, 1921).

[26] U.S.Office of Education (hereafter USOE), *Biennial Survey of Education, 1926-1928*, Bulletin, 1930, No. 16 (Washington, DC: United States Government Printing Office [USGPO], 1930); USOE, *Offerings and Registrations in High School Subjects, 1933-34*, Bulletin 1938, No. 6 (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1938); USOE, *Biennial Survey of Education in the United States, 1948-50*, Chapter 5, "Offerings and Enrollments in High-School Subjects," (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1951); Grace S. Wright, *Subject Offerings and Enrollments in Public Secondary Schools*, (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1965); Logan C. Osterndorf and Paul J. Horn, *Course Offerings, Enrollments, and Curriculum Practices in Public Secondary Schools, 1972-73* (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1976). To extend this series beyond 1973, the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) contracted with Evaluation Technologies, Incorporated (ETI) to develop a way to transform student transcript data from the *High School and Beyond* study of the cohort of 1982 graduates into estimates of course enrollment data compatible with the 1973 data collection. See Jerry West, Louis Diodato, and Nancy Sandberg, *A Trend Study of High School Offerings and Enrollments: 1972-73 and 1981-82*, NCES 84-224 (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1984). In our tables 1 through 3, the 1982 column is adapted from this study, though the 1973 column is adapted from the original data collection, Osterndorf and Horn, *Course Offerings*, 1972-73.

[27] In the latest study available, the transcript study of the cohort of 1987 graduates by Westat, Incorporated, over 3000 course titles were reported in a national sample of 22,700 student transcripts. The curriculum expansion continues apace. Westat, Inc., *High School Transcript Analysis: The 1987 Graduates*, Vol.1, *Tabulations: 1987 High School Transcript Study, With Comparisons to the Class of 1982*, Unpublished research report submitted to NCES, November, 1988.

[28] To encourage greater consistency among researchers in the coding of courses, NCES contracted with ETI to develop a classification system. Clifford Adelman did not "find the scheme to be compelling." "Devaluation, Diffusion and the College Connection: A Study of High School Transcripts, 1964-1981," Unpublished paper prepared for the National Commission on Excellence in Education, ERIC ED #288-244, March, 1983. For our purposes, we did not feel that the effort of the USOE to maintain and extend a "historical table" was particularly successful, since the approach used was to try to code each new set of course enrollments into the course categories of the previous data collections. Since we were interested in changes in the relative share of enrollments in a comprehensive set of subject field categories, we recoded all of the data from the most detailed tables in these survey reports into fourteen subject fields, with as much consistency across time as we were able. Any such coding is liable to a certain amount of error, and the appearance of change over time may, in small part, be the result of coding courses in one subject category rather than another.

[29] There are two notable exceptions, however. First is John F. Latimer's compelling but seldom cited book, *What's Happened to Our High Schools?*. The other is David K. Cohen's outstanding essay, "Origins" in Powell, et al, *The Shopping Mall High School*. Both have influenced our interpretation of high school curriculum reform.

[30] Latimer, *What's Happened?*, p. 118.

[31] Even the famous "Prosser Resolution" was presaged by his 1939 Inglis lecture at Harvard University. Charles Prosser, *Secondary Education and Life*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1939).

[34] Neither secondary teachers nor the national organizations that represent subject matter interests, such as the Music Educators National Conference, the National Science Teachers Association, etc., have played a very prominent role in the post-World War II curriculum debates. We believe the reason lies in the enormous enrollment increases that characterized the 1945 to 1976 period. There was always a demand for more and more teachers of every subject, classes were always adequately, if not over-, enrolled. From the teachers' perspective, it surely mattered very little if national enrollments in music were growing faster than those in art or physical education enrollments faster than those in mathematics. This condition has changed, however. In the Fall of 1968, the national enrollment in grades 9 through 12 reached 93 percent of the 14 to 17 year old population and has remained at or slightly below that figure since. In 1975, the 14 to 17 year old population topped out at about 17,125,000 and has been declining since. [See NCES, *Digest of Education Statistics: 1990* (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1991), p. 66.] This creates a climate in which subject matter specialists may have much more reason to be concerned about and actively engaged in debate about the high school curriculum. For example, while overall enrollment as estimated in these studies declined by about six percent between 1973 and 1982, enrollments in mathematics, vocational education, art, and agriculture actually increased, while enrollments in foreign language, science, and health and physical education decreased at one or two times the overall rate. We realize, of course, that it is dangerous to generalize about fields as disparate as physical education, where enrollment declines might be welcomed as an opportunity to have smaller classes in already overtaxed physical facilities, and foreign language, where enrollment loss may result in the cancellation of already tenuous third- and fourth-year language classes. Nonetheless, it is unlikely that in the curriculum debates of the 1990s, teachers and subject interest groups will stay on the sidelines.

[35] For sources of this idea, see Edward Krug, *The Shaping of the American High School, 1920-1941*, pp. 107-117; For arguments against this view, see Powell, et al, *The Shopping Mall*, n. 19, pp. 341-2 and Latimer, *What's Happened?*, pp. 73-74.

[36] Remember that the 1982 column is actually derived from a set of inferences based on the transcripts of the cohort of 1982 graduates.

[37] It is possible for the *proportion* of students enrolling in a particular subject to increase, while the proportionate share of enrollment in that subject remains the same or declines only if the total number of courses elected is rising. It was, from 5.61 courses per student in 1948-49 to 6.42 per student in 1960-61.

[38] See National Science Foundation, *The Status of Pre-College Science, Mathematics, and Social Science Education: 1955-1975*, 3 vols., (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1977).

[39] For years, the standard measure of student course time in American high schools has been the "credit" or the "Carnegie unit." One unit represents one academic year spent in a course meeting five times per week in periods ranging from 45 to 60 or more minutes. High school graduation requirements, whether state or local, are expressed in such units and these units are either recorded on or can be calculated from the student's transcript or cumulative record card.

[40] Edith S. Greer and Richard M. Harbeck, *What High School Pupils Study: A National Survey of the Scholastic Performance of Pupils of Various Abilities*, Bulletin, 1962, No. 10 (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1962), pp. 5-6. Other transcript studies are Adelman, "Devaluation", and Westat, *Tabulations*. In Table 5, the 1973 column represents estimates based on enrollments from Osterndorf and Horn, *Course Offerings*, adjusted using credit values calculated from Adelman, "Devaluation."

[41] For example, between 1961 and 1973, the share of enrollments claimed by courses in health, physical education, driver's education, safety, and ROTC increased by 10.8%, and the percent of all high school students enrolled in one or more of these courses increased by 21.6%. Over roughly the same period (1958 to 1973), the share of *credits* claimed by these courses increased by 164%. This large difference can only be explained by a significant change in the granting of academic credit for such courses. It is also true that in the earlier period, some non-academic courses met fewer than five times per week. Today, virtually all courses meet five days per week. See also Greer and Harbeck, *What High School Pupils Study*, pp. 5-6.

[42] Adelman, "Devaluation," pp. 13,14.

[43] Church and Sedlak, *Education*, p. 417

[44] Philip G. Johnson, *The Teaching of Science in Public High Schools: An Inquiry into Offerings, Enrollments, and Selected Teaching Conditions, 1947-48* (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1950); Kenneth E. Brown, *Mathematics in Public High Schools* (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1953); Kenneth E. Brown, *Offerings and Enrollments in Science and Mathematics in Public High Schools* (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1956); Kenneth E. Brown and Ellsworth S. Osbourn, *Offerings and Enrollments in Science and Mathematics in Public High Schools, 1958* (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1961); Kenneth A. Simon and W. Vance Grant, *Digest of Educational Statistics, 1965 Edition*, Bulletin 1965, No. 4 (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1966).

[45] From the President's National Committee for the Development of Scientists and Engineers, cited in Brown and Osbourn, *Offerings and Enrollments in Science and Mathematics in Public High Schools* (1956), p. ii.

[46] Tables 7 and 8 are arranged in paired columns, each pair representing a single cross-time comparison, because differences between these studies can not be reconciled at the desired level of detail. For example, the enrollment percentage in general math in West, Diodata, and Sandberg is 3.5 percent lower than in Osterndorf and Horn because they omit all enrollments in remedial mathematics. There are numerous differences of this kind.

[47] Wright, *Subject Offerings*, pp. 19-20.

[48] Exemplifying this, the 1958 transcript study was designed to answer such questions as, "Is the time of the academically able pupils being spent on appropriate subjects in our high schools?, . . . What proportion of a typical pupil's program is made up of academic subjects? The able pupils? The less able?," etc. Greer and Harbeck, *What High School Pupils Study*, p. 1.

[49] Brown, *Mathematics*, p. 40. Remedial math was not a reported category in the surveys of 1954, 1956, 1958, and 1962. In the general survey of 1960-61, remedial math was subsumed under "general math." There is thus no reliable information on the timing of the growth of remedial math enrollments from about 12,000 students in 1948 to over 328,000 in 1972.

[50] NSF, *Status of Precollege Science* .

[51] Osterndorf and Horn, *Course Offerings*, pp. 4-5.

[52] Osterndorf and Horn, *Course Offerings*, p. 22.

[53] Adelman, "Devaluation,"; Donald A. Rock, Ruth B. Ekstrom, Margaret E. Goertz, Thomas L. Hilton, and Judith Potlack, *Excellence in High School*

Education: Cross-Sectional Study, 1972-1980, Final Report, NCES Contract No. 300-83-0247 (Princeton, N.J.: Educational Testing Service, 1984).

[54] See Senta A. Raizen and Lyle V. Jones, Eds., *Indicators of Precollege Education in Science and Mathematics: A Preliminary Review*, (Washington DC: National Academy Press, 1985), pp. 114-132.

[55] Thirty-six states increased requirements in mathematics and thirty-three states increased them in science between 1980 and 1984, mostly prior to the influence of *A Nation At Risk*. See Raizen and Jones, *Indicators*, pp. 56-58.

[56] Scholars from across a broad political spectrum are coming to the view that a single curriculum is a better guarantor of equal educational opportunity than is a differentiated curriculum. See Jeannie Oakes, *Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 206; Mortimer Adler, *The Paideia Proposal: An Educational Manifesto* (New York: Macmillan, 1982), pp. 5-6.

[57] See U.S. Congress. Office of Technology Assessment, *Elementary and Secondary Education For Science and Engineering: A Technical Memorandum*, OTA-TM-SET-41 (Washington, DC: USGPO, 1988), pp. 15-16, and Raizen and Jones, *Indicators*, pp. 119-128.

CHAPTER 13

LITERATE AMERICA:
HIGH-LEVEL ADULT LITERACY AS A NATIONAL GOAL

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Literacy has been central to the creation of American culture and government. From the Puritans' transatlantic theological discourse in the seventeenth century to the American revolutionaries' debates about British sovereignty in the eighteenth, to the American novels of Susanna Rowson or James Fennimore Cooper in the early nineteenth century, to the vigor and scrappiness of the late nineteenth-century foreign-language press, to the Palmer raids on socialist editors who opposed America's involvement in World War I, to the proud, angry voices of the Harlem Renaissance, to the paperback revolution that brought Mickie Spillane to local drugstores after World War II, to the emergence of a feminist press in the 1970s-- printed publications have not only told our multifarious national story but have been an important part of it.

Americans only periodically focus on the importance of literacy to the nation's fate. Reading is a mundane activity, and in the twentieth century, with nearly universal elementary schooling and very high nominal literacy rates, we have sometimes taken literacy for granted. At other times, however, our needs for literacy have become pressing and have outdistanced the abilities of American readers. At these times, literacy has become an important policy issue and a frequent topic of social commentary. We are living in such a time.

In the mid-1980s, with recession and international competition threatening Americans' economic well-being, an adult literacy reform movement began and thrived, parallel to the movement to reform public schools. Like the public school reform movement, the adult literacy movement produced books that exposed the problem and newspaper series that described the work of local literacy agencies and dramatized the plight of low-literacy adults. There were "white papers" on TV and alarming results from functional literacy tests. On some issues this kind of reform enthusiasm fades when the problem turns out to be recalcitrant and quick solutions are not fouund. But the staying power of the 1980s adult literacy reform movement has been impressive. It is enshrined in the education goals set by President Bush and the nation's governors at Charlottesvile in 1989, which established universal high-level adult literacy as a national goal, and in the National Literacy Act of 1991, in which Congress created a National Institute for Literacy to provide research and services and authorized funds to strengthen state literacy agencies, support workplace literacy training, and expand the Even Start program for family literacy training. These programs are aimed at a very ambitious goal. The National Education Goal for adult literacy states that "by the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship." c78E[1]

How shall we understand this goal? What does it mean that everyone will have necessary skills for work and citizenship, and how would we measure our success in attempting to reach the goal? Despite our long history of widespread, expanding literacy, recent adult literacy assessments suggest that we are far from the goal at present.[2] History cannot tell us the answers, but it may provide some understanding of the problems. Literacy is complex; history can illustrate some of the intricacies with which policy must reckon. This paper will highlight some of those complexities. The first is that literacy is not just a skill, or even a set of skills, but has a content. Because literacy has a cultural content, it is not neutral. Acquiring or transmitting literacy has an ideological dimension. In the nation-building process, especially in countries with an ethnically diverse population, literacy training is typically coupled with an effort to unite the public politically, culturally, and linguistically. The state uses literacy to create consensus and cohesion. But how unitary can public print culture be? Whose culture should it represent? On the other hand, what are the consequences of supporting a print culture that is extremely diverse? These issues have taken different forms at different times in American history, and they have been salient in the current debates about school curriculum. They also push the historian of literacy out into the history of education, of organized knowledge, and of public discourse.

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[1] Carroll Campbell, et al., The National Education Goals Report: Building A Nation of Learners (Washington: National Education Goals Panel, 1992), p.40.

Second, even if we agreed on the proper content of literacy, it is nonetheless difficult to measure literacy abilities and to say how much literacy a person needs. We can define it functionally, as in the current goals: literacy will allow individuals to "compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship." The Literacy Defininition Committee of the National Adult Literacy Survey avoided specifying particular functions like economic or political participation, and left the purpose more general: literacy is "using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals, and to develop one's knowledge and potential."[3] Both of these definitions emphasize the active use of literacy abilities to accomplish social goals, but they don't tell us what abilities will be emphasized, how they will be measured, or what level of competence would be considered necessary to achieve a national goal of successful functioning literacy. The techniques used to measure literacy have changed continually over time, as have the criteria for determining an adequate level of literacy.

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[2] The best assessments are Irwin S. Kirsch and Ann Jungeblut, Literacy: Profiles of America's Young Adults (Princeton, National Assessment of Education Progress, 1986) and Irwin S. Kirsch, Ann Jungeblut, and Anne Campbell, Beyond the School Doors: the Literacy Needs of Job Seekers Served by the U.S. Department of Labor (Princeton, Educational Testing Service, 1992).

The third complexity revealed by history is that literacy is rooted in the social structure and is thus stubbornly unequal. Literacy is associated with power, with advancement, and with status. Power relationships and group competition militate against our ideal of equal opportunity when it comes to literacy. For most of our history, advantaged Americans have kept women, nonwhite people, and poor people from full access to education. Such outright discrimination has reduced over time, because of the struggles of oppressed groups and because our political principles challenge our prejudices. But advantaged people have the appetite and the resources to acquire more and more education themselves, and our literacy needs and expectations are continually rising, so the gaps between groups continue at higher levels. So the complicated history of literacy is characterized by converging rates of literacy at lower levels and increasingly visible divergence at higher levels as literacy expectations rise.

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[3] Irwin S. Kirsch and Ann Jungeblut, Literacy: Profile of American's Young Adults (Princeton: Educational Testing Service, 1986), p.3.

The fourth complexity is that literacy training goes on in two quite different arenas-- in the preparatory world of elementary and secondary education and, for some, in adult literacy training programs. So when we say we want to improve adult literacy, we may try to improve elementary and secondary education so that future generations of adults will have better literacy abilities, or we may try to affect adult literacy rates directly by improving adults' literacy. It is very difficult to alter national average literacy rates through adult training. Despite some well-known and demonstrably successful campaigns for adult literacy training in various periods, the nation's long-run, rising literacy rate has been more a product of the continually increasing level of school attainment in the population. This process has worked because we have had almost all of the population in schools in their youth, whereas we have never had more than a tiny portion of the adult population in any kind of formal instructional programs. There are other good reasons to put resources into adult literacy training, but not because it will raise the national average literacy rate very much. On the other hand, as we shall see, there are reasons to doubt whether the historic strategy of continually increased schooling will work well in the future to improve the quality of general literacy in the population. History doesn't provide policy blueprints; it provides food for thought.

A selective tour through the history of literacy in the United States will illustrate these complexities. Let us look first at the stereotype of highly literate seventeenth-century Puritan New England, a favorite spot for historians seeking the origins of Anglo-American culture. Historians of British colonial America have traditionally emphasized the New England colonies, the Puritan religion, and the high education levels of the initial settlers.[4] But in the first book-length study of literacy in American history, Kenneth Lockridge challenged the idea of widespread high literacy among the first English colonists in New England. Only about 60 percent of the men and 30 percent of the women in the first generation could sign their names. Lockridge's figures show New England literacy rising sharply for both men and women in the seventeenth century, a rise which he attributed to the powerful influence of Puritanism. The purposes of literacy in this society, Lockridge argued, were conservative. He portrayed the initial colonists as living in a predominantly oral, premodern environment similar to that of European peasants.[5] Recent historians have rejected the premodern-modern dichotomy. David Hall has used instead the term "traditional," to summarize the wide circulation of a limited number of steady-selling texts, focussed mostly on religion. People read these texts over and over. In this sense, it was a more sparse literacy environment than later.[6]

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[4] Samuel Eliot Morison, Puritan Pronaos: The Intellectual Life of Colonial New England (New York, 1936), pp. 82-85.

In this regard colonial New England was typical of other provincial situations in the early modern West, not exceptional. Individuals with high levels of education and extensive libraries were unusual, but many families owned a few books, and there were no newspapers or magazines. The purposes of literacy were predominantly conservative; in most situations readers were receivers of authoritative text about religion or law. Reading fare was rounded out by popular forms that were more responsive to daily life and local events, like almanacs, histories, captivity narratives, sermons that reported strange occurrences, and execution confessions.[7] Because there were relatively fewer texts, people tended to read them repeatedly; certainly this was the case with the Bible, by far the most common book. Some scholars have called this repeated reading of fewer texts "intensive" reading, as contrasted with the quicker reading of competing texts in later centuries. Even in later times, of course, "intensive" reading survived and was important, not only in Bible reading but in the re-reading of favorite books and stories, or in the absorbing experience of a novel.[8] But in the seventeenth century, it was the main mode of reading.

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[5] Kenneth A. Lockridge, Literacy in Colonial New England: An Enquiry into the Social Context of Literacy in the Early Modern West (New York: Norton, 1974).

[6] David D. Hall, "The Uses of Literacy in New England, 1600-1850," in William L. Joyce, David D. Hall, Richard D. Brown, and John B. Hench, eds., Printing and Society in Early America (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1983), p.24 and passim.

[7] See David Paul Nord, "Teleology and News: the Religious Roots of American Journalism, 1630-1730," Journal of American History (June, 1990), pp.9-38.

Yet the seeds of change were present in the colonial situation. Transatlantic commerce fostered literacy and the development of coastal towns; imperial political relations produced strain and controversy by the late seventeenth century; and centrifugal forces pressing the colonists away from the European metropolis caused this highly literate population to develop a book trade and indigenous newspapers. Printed publications became more secular, more diverse, and more polemical in the eighteenth century. The center of gravity in colonial printing shifted to politics.

Eventually, in the nineteenth century, the diffusion of information, the expansion of literacy, and the diversity and dispersal of the population led to publications that supported individualism and pluralism.[9] For several decades, however, republican politics dominated the purposes of literacy, as Michael Warner's recent work argues.[10] His work suggests a two-stage evolution away from the cohesive, traditional world view of seventeenth-century reading matter. First came the legitimation of different views on public issues, that is, arguments within the "public sphere," so central to republican politics. Only later, and somewhat inhibited by the republican focus on public discourse, came the legitimation of printed publications for individualistic, nonpublic uses like the reading of novels. By the mid-nineteenth century, however, despite the persistence of authoritative, traditional texts, and despite the continued importance of politics in American print matter, American literacy was accommodating novels, women's journals, story papers, and farm magazines alongside cheap daily newspapers and high literary journals.[11] As Richard D. Brown has written, by 1850 "America had gone from a society where public information had been scarce, and chiefly under the control of the learned and wealthy few, to a society in which it was abundant and under no control other than the interests and appetites of a vast, popular public of consumers."[12]

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[8] William J. Gilmore, Reading Becomes a Necessity of Life: Material and Cultural Life in Rural New England, 1780-1835 (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989), pp. 264-269; Cathy Davidson, The Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America (New York, Oxford University Press, 1986), pp. 72-3.

[9] Richard D. Brown, Knowledge is Power: The Diffusion of Information in Early America, 1700-1865 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); and Brown, "From Cohesion to Competition," in Joyce et al., Printing and Society, pp. 300-309.

Each new stage of expansion, diversification, and fragmentation of reading fare brought anxieties to some elites, but worries about pluralism seem to have been offset in American history by an environment which fostered the diverse uses of print. Unlike the English, most American writers who commented on literacy thought that the key to social order was more education, not less.[13] From Thomas Jefferson to Horace Mann to John Dewey, American educators have argued that democracy cannot work without an intelligent reading public. Although free common schooling was accompanied with large doses of Anglo-American cultural conformity, and although the first amendment guarantee of a free press was at times contravened, both were crucial to the development of competing ideas in print.

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[10] Michael Warner, The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public sphere in Eighteenth-Century America (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990).

[11] Davidson, Revolution and the Word; and Michael Denning, Mechanic Accents: Dime Novels and Working-Class culture in America (London: Verso, 1987).

[12] Brown, Knowledge is Power, p.286.

The early nineteenth century saw a narrowing of the gap in literacy between white men and white women. It is not clear how big the gap had been in the late eighteenth century; Lockridge's signature-counting estimates, showing a two-to-one advantage for white men over white women (90 to 45 percent), have been challenged by recent scholars. Some argue that many women who signed an "X" could nonetheless read[14], and other historians have discovered rates of female signing as high as 70 to 90 percent in some areas.[15] On the other hand, no one is suggesting that educational opportunities were equal, even at the elementary level. Clearly, men had higher literacy rates in the early national period. By 1850, this gender advantage seems to have almost disappeared among whites, if we take seriously the U.S. Census figures on self-reported literacy, which showed white females and males both over 90 percent.[16] But having achieved that low-level parity, white women faced educational discrimination at the secondary and collegiate levels, and measures of higher-level literacy abilities reflected these gender biases; some even remain today. Gender differences illustrate the general pattern in the history of literacy: while gaps narrowed at rudimentary literacy levels, they persisted at higher levels, and as the nation raised its literacy expectations, these gaps became more apparent and more important.[17]

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[13] Carl F. Kaestle, "'The Scylla of Brutal Ignorance and the Charybdis of a Literary Education': Elite Attitudes toward Mass Education in Early Industrial England and America," in Lawrence Stone, ed., Schooling and Society (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1976), pp. 177-191.

[14] Lockridge, Literacy in Colonial New England, pp.38-39; E. Jennifer Monaghan, "Literacy Instruction and Gender in Colonial New England," in Cathy N. Davidson, Reading in America: Literature & Social History (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

[15] Gilmore, Reading Becomes a Necessity, p. 127; Linda Auwers, "Reading the Marks of the Past: Exploring Female Literacy in Colonial Windsor, Connecticut," Historical Methods 13 (1980), 204-214.

Discrimination was even greater across racial lines. Whites only gradually and begrudgingly extended some public schooling to minorities; nonwhite groups had to fight to get better public schools and to attain literacy. If there was anything that united African-American leaders, from slavery, through Reconstruction, and through the Civil Rights struggles of the twentieth century, it was the importance of education and literacy, even in a world where discrimination prevented black Americans from attaining high-literacy jobs. Similar attitudes prevailed among Hispanic and Asian America leaders.

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[16] Maris A. Vinovskis and Richard Bernard, "Beyond Catharine Beecher: Female Education in the Antebellum Period," Signs 3 (Summer, 1978), 856-69. See also, Lee Soltow and Edward Stevens, The Rise of Literacy and the Common School in the United States: A Socioeconomic Anlysis to 1870 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), pp. 156-158.

[17] This theme is pursued in Carl F. Kaestle, "Literacy and Diversity: Themes from a Social History of the American Reading Public," History of Education Quarterly 28 (Winter, 1988), 545-547. See also Gita Z. Wilder and Kristin Powell, Sex Differences in Test Performance: A Suvery of the Literature (New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1989).

New and excluded groups faced a culture of printed words, a country where whites emphasized the value of public schooling, a country where the combination of capitalism and protected free speech guaranteed that printed matter would continually expand into new markets, new topics, and new purposes. Recognizing the importance of print, excluded groups in U.S. history have made literacy and education a central goal, a tool by which to assimilate or to assert group rights.[18] Freed blacks after the Civil War, said Booker T. Washington, were "a whole race trying to go to school"; and the foreign-language press, paradoxically, was more influential in assimilating European immigrants to American institutions and traditions than any Americanization program designed for the purpose.[19]

Beneath the placid surface of the history of literacy rates is a lot of political turbulence, ethnic competition, cultural aspiration, and personal transformation. Thus, the nineteenth century closed with many different groups striving to create for their groups not only literacy skills but distinctive reading materials. The foreign-language press thrived, regional centers of publication pulled away from New York and Boston, specialized publications increased, the development of national brand advertising fostered a "revolution" in cheap magazines, and the rotary presses churned out "yellow" journalism as well as huge runs of big-city papers that reached farther and farther into the hinterland. At turn-of-the-century, diverse publications bristled while the instruments of standardization were in their infancy: syndicated columns, newspaper chains, wire services, marketing surveys, widespread secondary education. The dramatic tension between diversity and standardization remained in play from that time to our own, as new groups developed various ways to express themselves in print and became part of the pluralistic literacy scene. But as time passed, commercial reading matter became more standardized, and high schools gave more and more young people a smattering of common academic culture.

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[18] On the reactions of enslaved blacks to white literacy, see Warner, Letters of the Republic, p.11 and the references there; also, Janet Duitsman Cornelius, When I Can Read My Title Clear: Literacy, Slavery, and Religion in the Antebellum South (Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1991).

[19] See Mordecai Soltes, The Yiddish Press in America: An Americanizing Agency (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1925); and Carl Wittke, The German-Language Press in America (Lexington: University of Kentuky Press, 1957, chapter 11.

By 1900 elementary school attendance was almost universal among whites, even though many went for only a few years. Over 90 percent of native-born whites claimed that they could read, and the percentage of blacks who said they were literate were increasing rapidly.[20] A few groups, like native Americans, were caught in a much more severe attempt both to suppress their culture and to exclude them from white institutions; thus they were at a huge disadvantage with regard to English print literacy. Even for the remainder of the population, the length and sophistication of one's literacy training depended upon gender, wealth and ethnicity. Nonetheless, America had moved successfully toward the goals of widespread rudimentary literacy for most people and a higher, more critical literacy for a smaller elite. Daniel and Lauren Resnick charted the evolution of these goals across the history of industrial France and the United States. In the early twentieth century America had two literacy goals: first, competent, passive literacy for all, a goal inherited from the "civic-national" phase of literacy's evolution, plus the more active "elite-technical" skills reserved for a minority of the population in an evolving industrial society.[21]

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[20] John K. Folger and Charles B. Nam, Education of the American Population (Washington, Bureau of the Census, 1967), chapter IV.

The simple two-tiered depiction, however, leaves out a great deal of activity in the areas between rudimentary mass literacy and highly trained critical literacy. Gaps were narrowed, secondary education expanded, the book reading market widened apace, literacy expectations expanded. Not only were more blacks able to say they could read at the rudimentary level, but black colleges increased, and the black intelligentsia debated an agenda for an educated middle-class.[22]

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[21] See Daniel P. Resnick and Lauren B. Resnick, "The Nature of Literacy: An Historical Exploration," Harvard Educational Review 47 (August, 1977) 370-385.

[22] James Anderson, The Education of Black Americans in the South, 1860-1920 (New York: Oxford University Press, 19); August Meier, Negro Thought in America, 1880-1920 ( ); Michael G. Fultz, "Education in the Black Monthly Periodical Press, 1900-1910," in Harvey G. Neufeldt and Leo McGee, eds., Education of the Afro-American Adult (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1990), pp. 75-112.

The percentage of 17-year-olds who had graduated from high school increased from 2 percent in 1870 to 6.4 percent in 1900, then to 17 percent in 1920 and to 51 percent in 1940.[23] Active book readers tend to be high school attenders, so the book market thrived as education expanded. It was not limited to high school graduates, however. In 1919, 15 percent of low and medium-income white urban dwellers in one survey said they purchased books. The same survey showed that 96 percent purchased newspapers. Newspaper reading was ubiquitous at turn of the century. A survey of industrial workers in 1890 discovered that newspaper purchasing rates varied from 62 percent among coke workers to 92 percent among glass workers. In a 1901 survey 95 percent of low-income, urban, employed workers said they purchased newspapers or books (most, presumably, buying newspapers).[24]

Concerns about illiteracy one hundred years ago were focussed either on European immigrants or black Americans. Many European immigrants were illiterate and many were non-English speaking; some were both, and often commentators just equated the two. Concerns about the assimilation of immigrants led to the establishment of

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[23] Abbott L. Ferriss, Indicators of Trends in American Education (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1969), pp. 378-379.

[24] Carl F. Kaestle, Helen Damon-Moore, Lawrence C. Stedman, Katherine Tinsley, and William Vance Trollinger, Jr., Literacy in the United States: Readers and Reading since 1880 (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1991), p. 164. See also David Paul Nord, "Working-Class Readers: Family, Community, and Reading in Late 19th-Century America," Communication Research 13 (April, 1986), 156-181.

Americanization programs, partly but not wholly aimed at literacy training, and at immigration restriction, which came in 1921. The Americanization classes, like most adult education ventures, touched only a tiny percentage of all immigrants, most of whom became familiar with the English language and American institutions in other ways.[25] The heavy rates of European immigration from 1880 to 1920 kept the illiteracy rate high among the foreign-born in America; it was 12 percent in 1880 and 13 percent in 1920, without much variation in the interim.[26] When immigration was restricted, of course, the anxieties about the immigrant "threat" receded. Indeed, the literacy problem alleviated, since the illiteracy rates among immigrants' children were much lower than among the first generation.

Black illiteracy was a different kind of problem. There was no new influx of illiterate black Americans from abroad, so after 1865 their illiteracy rates were gradually decreasing. Northern white missionary teachers and Southern blacks mounted extensive schooling efforts during Reconstruction, and blacks continued these efforts after Reconstruction collapsed. But there was much mixed opinion among whites on the subject of education for black Americans, as there was for Hispanics. Most American elites, unlike their English and continental counterparts, believed that popular education for working-class whites would lead to assimilation and good behavior. For nonwhites, however, some harbored the ultra-conservative notion that safety and social order was served by keeping the group ignorant.[27] In reaction to Northern philanthropists" late nineteenth-century efforts to rpomote industrial education for southern African Americans, the Richmond Dispatch called black schools "hotbeds of arrogance and agressions," and the Farmville Herald of Virginia said "when they learn to spell dog and cat they throw away the hoe." Hispanic Americans and other nonwhites faced similar anti-education views. In Texas, one school superintendent said that keeping the Mexican "on his knees in an onion patch. . . does not mix well with education."[28] Despite these barriers, nonwhite illiteracy decreased. We have separate national figures only for blacks, whose self-reported illiteracy rate went from 81 percent in 1870 to 45 percent in 1900 to 23 percent in 1920. As in the earlier case of white women, the convergence of these crude literacy rates masked remaining gaps at higher levels, and these gaps were greater for minorities than for women.

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[25] Frank Thompson, Schooling of the Immigrant (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1920), pp. 32-34.

[26] Sanford Winston, Illiteracy in the United States, From 1870 to 1920 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), p.58.

With entry-level literacy becoming so common, attention turned in the 1920s and 30s to the quality of reading abilities among those counted as literate. Experts invented the idea of "functional literacy." One literacy expert said in 1920 that some who were "not classified as illiterates" nonetheless "lack facility in reading and writing."[29] William Gray, a leading reading researcher, remarked in a speech to the National Education Association in 1930 that one had to look beyond the high nominal literacy rates in the U.S. Census. Millions of people, he said, "have learned to engage in the very simplest reading and writing activities but have not attined functioning literacy." Taking up the question, the National Education Association concluded that functional literacy should be defined by the number of grades one had completed in school. They suggested as a threshold for functional literacy that six grades of school should be completed.[30] This standard was not immediately adopted, but other agencies soon proposed more modest standards, and grade-level soon became the measuring stick for functional literacy. One might think that this was hardly better than asking people if they could read, since going to school does not guarantee learning. Everyone knows of children who have gone to school and remained far behind grade level reading ability, or even illiterate. On average, however, school attendance does correlate with increased learning, so the grade-level definition was a modest advance. The Civilian Conservation Corps used third grade as an equivalent of functional literacy in the 1930s, and the Army used fourth grade during

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[27] Kaestle, "Elite Attitudes," pp. 185-186.

[28] James Anderson, The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), p. 97; Herschel T. Manuel, The Education of Mexican and Spanish-speaking Children in Texas (Austin: University of Texas Press: 1930), p.77.

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[29] Winston, Illiteracy, p.15.

[30] William S. Gray, "Catching Up with Literacy," in National Education Association, Proceedings (Washington, D.C., 71st Annual Meeting, 1933), p.280; Wanda Dauksza Cook, Adult Literacy Education in the United States (Newark, Del., International Reading Association, 1977), p. 43.

World War II. The Census Bureau escalated the standard to fifth grade in 1947 and to 6th grade in 1952.[31] The old notion, that mass rudimentary literacy was adequate to our national needs, was giving way to a more demanding goal.

Two other changes occurred in literacy as a public issue in the early decades of the twentieth century: first, state and federal governments got concerned and began to urge action, and second, their attention more often turned from the focus on immigrants and minorities that had been common in the nineteenth century to a more general concern with low-literacy adults in the whole population.

One famous program that became a model for state intervention elsewhere, began in Rowan County, Kentuky, in 1911. Cora Stewart and a group of public school teachers volunteered to open the county's schools to adults at night, and they visited homes throughout the county to recruit students. Nearly one-third of the population enrolled. The teaching materials included a newspaper about local events produced specially for these "Moonlight Schools" and a recently published math book that discussed rural problems. The Moonlight Schools reported great success in teaching literacy, and Stewart became a popular advisor and speaker to groups elsewhere.[32] Publicity surrounding programs like the Moonlight Schools tended to portray literacy as an either-or proposition, despite the experts' turn to higher-level definitions of functional literacy, In only seven or eight weeks, said Stewart, wholly illiterate people could learn to read. This notion-- that one was either literate or not, and that it was relatively easy to teach reading to adults-- flew in the face of developing professional knowledge, but echoes of this attitude have persisted in the public mind and in government rhetoric even down to our time.

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[31] Kaestle et al., Literacy in the United States, p.92

[32] P. P. Claxton, Illiteracy in the United States and an Experiment for Its Elimination (Washington: Bureau of Education, Bulletin No. 20, 1913); Cora Wilson Stewart, Moonlight Schools for the Emancipation of Adult Illiterates (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1922).

While adult literacy programs wrestled with the relatively small but troubling percentage of people who were totally illiterate or could barely read, the average American got more and more schooling. By mid-century, the country was well-educated by several measures. The Census Bureau reported that only about 3 percent of the population said they couldn't read or write at all. Only eleven percent of the population had fewer than five years of schooling, the general standard of functional illiteracy at the time.[33] Over 98 percent of all children aged 7 to 13 were enrolled in school, and 71 percent of those aged 16 to 17. Among 17-year-olds, 59 percent were high school graduates.[34] Eighteen percent of all 23-year-olds held bachelors degrees, double the proportion of ten years earlier.[35]

But what of the quality of literacy? Were Americans satisfied with the quality of learning in their schools? Many were, but criticism was mounting, and by the end of the decade of the 1950s, criticism of the public schools was rampant. The story of school reform brings us beyond the history of print literacy, but we cannot understand our current literacy goals without some attention to the history of these more general school reform efforts. Indeed, one can see the succession of contrasting school reforms since 1950 as a process in which the nation edged toward a goal of inclusive, critical literacy.

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[33] Cook, Adult Literacy Education, p.64.

[34] Ferriss, Indicators of Trends, pp.378, 380.

[35] Ferris, Indicators of Trends, p.389.

We have already seen that the common definition of functional literacy by grade level had risen to fifth grade by 1950. This upgading of expectations continued. In 1960 the U.S. Office of Education used a sixth-grade standard, and in the 1970s some experts concluded that every adult needed to be able to read at the twelfth-grade level.[36] This level of reading ability implies not just more vocabulary and more comprehension, but advanced literacy skills, such as (in the Resnicks' words) "the ability to gain information from reading and use that information in new contexts." Jeanne Chall argues that to function well in today's society, everyone needs to be able to read to understand new subject matter and to sort out multiple viewpoints on issues. And even the middling level of the new adult literacy levels defined by Kirsch and his associates demands that readers be able "to search fairly dense text" for information and "to integrate information from relatively long text that does not contain organizational aids such as headings." As we get to the fourth and fifth levels, the need to make inferences increases, as does the need to synthesize or compare complex texts.[37] If all adults are to read at this level, then all children must have a curriculum loaded with cognitive work-- not academic in the old sense of rote memorizing and following set procedures, but a highly academic curriculum in a new sense. And if we are to increase the percentage of adults in the current population who have such skills, we would have to increase vastly the availability, quality, and relevance of programs for low-literacy adults.[38]

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[36] Kaestle et al., Literacy in the United States, p.92; Carmen St. John Hunter and David Harman, Adult Literacy in the United States (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), p.27; John B. Carroll and Jeanne C. Chall, Toward a Literate Society (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1975), p.8; see also Jeanne S. Chall, "Policy Implications of Literacy Definitions," in Richard L. Venezky, Daniel A. Wagner, and Barrie S. Ciliberti, eds., Toward Defining Literacy (Newark, Del.: International Reading Association, 1990).

Critical literacy skills for all was clearly not the goal in 1950. In the area of adult literacy training, the large number of draftees rejected from service in World War II because of low literacy caused a ripple of concern, and the Carnegie Foundation put some money into literacy programs for black Americans, but literacy was not an important item on federal and state social agendas. As for the public schools, they were managing to turn out a population most of whom met the fifth-grade functional literacy standard. High schools widely adopted a version of Progressive education known as "Life Adjustment" education, which targetted the middle 60 percent of the school population for a less academic curriculum, emphasizing academic learning for the top 20 percent and trade education for the bottom 20 percent.

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[37] Resnicks, "Nature of Literacy," p.382; Chall, "Policy Implications of Literacy Definitions," pp. 58-59; Kirsch, Jungeblut, and Campbell, Beyond the School Doors, p.26.

[38] See Hannah A. Fingeret, "Changing Literacy Instruction: Moving Beyond the Status Quo," in Forrest P. Chisman et al., Leadership for Literacy: the Agenda for the 1990s (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1990), pp. 25-50; and Gordon Berlin and Andrew Sum, Toward a More Perfect Union: Basic Skills, Poor Families, and Our Economic Future (New York: The Ford Foundation, 1989), pp. 24-38.

After 1950 a series of school reforms gradually, tacitly, and cumulatively established the new literacy goal and moved the nation unevenly toward it. There were two phases of school reform debate in the 1950s. Both sets of critics advocated a more academic emphasis, but they differed in two other ways. The academic critics of the public schools in the early 1950s were concerned about the whole range of traditional disciplines, including history and literature. Second, they argued that all children should study the same curriculum. Their chief spokesperson, Arthur Bestor, a historian from the University of Illinois, was adamant about the undemocratic nature of the "life adjustment" curriculum because it envisioned a more academic curriculum for college bound students than for others. This practice, Bestor fumed, was based on the belief that sixty percent of the students "are incapable of being benefited by intellectual training," a falsehood that "declares invalid most of the assumptions that have underlain American democracy."[39] Whatever the merits of his critique, Bestor was urging an across-the-board rededication to academic learning for the critical tasks of citizenship, an impulse relevant to today's goal of inclusive, critical literacy.

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[39] Arthur Bestor, Educational Wastelands: The Retreat from Learning in our Public Schools (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, second edition, 1985, originally published 1953), p.82.

Bestor and other academic critics did not have very much impact on actual school practice in the mid-1950s. After the launching of the Soviet satellite Sputnik in 1957, school reform pushing for tougher academic work had more influence, but it took a different direction. It emphasized math, science and foreign languages more than history, geography, literature or the arts; and it emphasized special courses for academically talented students.[40] One feature of this curriculum reform movement relevant to today's goal of critical literacy was its emphasis on critical thinking and on the student as an active learner. Whatever the eventual pitfalls of the new math, new science, and the new language labs, this reform period nudged many schools toward more emphasis on active intellectual work, at least for some students. And the high SAT scores of the early 1960s made this period seem like the heyday of academic learning in high school to some later critics.

By the mid-1960s, under the influence of the Civil Rights Movement and President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, attention had shifted to another portion of the school population equally relevant to any goal of universal, critical literacy: low-achieving disadvantaged children. Arguing both on grounds of equal opportunity and the creation of a productive work force, Congress passed such programs as Head Start and Chapter 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education

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[40] Barbara Barksdale Clowse, Brainpower for the Cold War: The Sputnik Crisis and National Defense Education Act of 1958 (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1981).

Act of 1965, aimed at raising the basic reading and math abilities of pupils in low-income areas. Twenty-five years and billions of dollars later the evaluation verdict on these programs is still mixed, suggesting positive but modest pay-off; nonetheless, whether from these programs or the pressures put on elementary schools to reorient their goals and instructional efforts, the achievement scores of minority and white students have partially converged between 1970 (when the National Assessment of Educational Progress began monitoring school achievement) and the present. This suggests indirectly that the shift in the national educational agenda had some effect.[41]

But it also created some backlash. The red tape of federal regulations, plus the reduction in instructional time for other school subjects like social studies and science, created frustration among local educators. And the attention to "skills," without much talk about content, lent itself to criticism. It was wrong on two grounds, critics said. First, it was cognitively naive. All skills had to be rooted in some knowledge of subject matter.[42] Second, it represented a failure of nerve about standards. Opponents of the 1960s reforms and the accompanying ethos of pluralism charged that educators had become moral relativists and were afraid to stand for anything-- whether content or values-- because they might be said to be promoting a biased history, something that was the property of privileged groups.[43] At its worst, this stereotype portrayed schools as places where "anything goes," where the goal was simply to make kids feel good about themselves. Such criticism of the public schools gathered force in the late 1970s and the 1980s, depicting the 1960s and 70s as a time of reinforced ethnic identity in inner-city schools and of laissez faire smorgaasbord curricula in suburban high schools.[44]

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[41] Ina V. S. Mullis and Lynn B. Jenkins, The Reading Report Card, 1971-88: Trends from the Nation's Report Card (Princeton, Educational Testing Service, 1990), pp. 13-15. On the evaluation of Head Start, see Marshall Smith and J. S. Bissell, "Report Analysis: the Impact of Head Start," Harvard Educational Review 40 (1970), 51-104; and R. Haskins, "Beyond Metaphor: the Efficacy of Early Childhood Education," American Psychologist 44 (1989), 274-282. On Title I and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, see Julie Roy Jeffrey, Education for Children of the Poor: A Study of the Origins and Implementation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1978); Gary Natriello, Edward McDell, and Aaron Pallas, Schooling Disadvantaged Children: Racing against Catastrophe (New York: Teachers College Press, 1990); and Commission on Chapter 1, Making Schools Work for Children in Poverty (Washington: Council of Chief State School Officers, 1992).

Added to this was the recession of the 1970s, the threat of Japanese economic productivity, and the declining scores on college entrance tests. The picture of decline in the eyes of some observors was devastating. Had American literacy and school achievement steadily expanded and improved for a century and a half only to decline just when the United States was faced with serious trouble in the global economy? Had the great pluralistic experiment finally slowed to a stand-still through lack of consensus and will? Had the strategy of more and more schooling for more and more people finally failed to pay off with the advanced skills we needed?

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[42] See Thomas G. Sticht, and B. A. McDonald, Making the Nation Smarter: The Intergenerational Transfer of Cognitive Ability (San Diego: Applied Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences, Inc: 1989); and Robert Glaser, "Education and Thinking: The Role of Knowledge," American Psychologist 39 (January, 1984).

[43] Diane Ravitch and Chester E. Finn, Jr., What Do Our 17-Year-Olds Know? A Report on the First National Assessment of History and Literature (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), p. 8.

[44] Frank E. Armbruster, Our Children's Crippled Future: How American Education Has Failed (New York: Quadrangle, 1977); Paul Copperman, The Literacy Hoax: The Decline of Reading, Writing, and Learning in the Public Schools and What We Can Do about It (New York: William Morrow, 1978); Arthur G. Powell, Eleanor Farrar, and David K. Cohen, The Shopping Mall High School: Winners and Losers in the Educational Marketplace (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1985).

Anxieties about decline-- in the schools or in the society more generally-- were nothing new in American history, of course. They have recurred periodically since the days when the Founding Fathers feared that excessive democracy would degenerate into chaos without the strong rudder of a monarchy. The decline of republics was a commonplace of their historical understanding.[45] In the late nineteenth century critics of the "Gilded Age" saw corruption and gaudy display everywhere. Some became "good government" types and pursued reforms like the civil service. In a similar vein urban reformers of the 1890s aimed to clean up the corrupted school system by centralizing school boards and getting them back in the hands of more responsible elites.[46] And in the 1950s, when the American dream had resulted in most white middle-class families having The Saturday Evening Post on their coffee tables and a TV in the corner of the living room, critics following the Frankfurt School agonized about the threat of such mass culture.[47] Their heir in our day, Allan Bloom, bemoaned the decline of serious book reading, the rise of rock music, and the spread of cultural relativism in The Closing of the American Mind. [48] Meanwhile, E. D. Hirsch wrote about the decline of shared knowledge in our culture due to the retreat of the schools from content. "We cannot assume that young people today know things that were known in the past by almost every literate person in the culture." [49]

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[45] See Gordon S. Wood, The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1969), pp. 92, 123-4.

[46] David B. Tyack, The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974).

Have literacy and shared knowledge declined? It is a complicated question that has engendered interpretations of various kinds, from careful, social science reviews of the assessment literature, to polemics more visibly shaped by politics and educational philosophy.[50] The test scores tell a mixed picture. Some scores went down, some went up, some stayed the same, from the 60s to the 80s. Some of the declines are attributable to artificial causes, like a changing population taking the test. But in the 1970s, on some highly publicized tests, like the Scholastic Aptitude Tests, there were some real declines.

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[47] Bernard Rosenberg and David M. White, eds., Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1957); see also Patrick Brantlinger, Bread and Circuses: theories of Mass Culture as Social Decay (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983).

[48] Allan Bloom, The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls of Today's Students (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1987).

[49] E. D. Hirsch, Jr., Cultural Literacy: What Every American Needs To Know (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1987), p. 8. On complaints about decline that recurred as schools became more and more inclusive, see Lawrence A. Cremin, Popular Education and Its Discontents (New York: Harper & Row, 1990), pp. 1-12.

[50] See Kaestle et al., Literacy, Chapter 3 and 4, and the works cited there, for examples.

For most other tests, such as reading achievement tests, the score declines were for a given grade level, so they were offset by the rising school attainment rates (national average school attainment rose two years between 1960 and 1980).[51] This phenomenon led the famous Excellence Commission of 1983 to remark, almost as an aside, that "it is important, of course, to recognize that the average citizen today is better educated and more knowledgeable than the average citizen of a generation ago-- more literate, and exposed to more mathematics, literature, and science."[52]

In the midst of all the talk about decline, the most telling trend in reading scores waas one that showed virtually no change-- the report from the National Assessment of Educational Progress that although minority reading scores had improved relative to whites over the period 1970 to 1988, the national average was almost unchanged. This was not a decline, but it was a stagnation over a period of nearly twenty years, at a time when literacy demands and expectations were rising and concerns about literacy were linked to prominent national problems.[53]

There are many series of comparable test scores on reading ability and on the general knowledge demanded by college entrance tests, especially after 1950. They are hard to interpret, but the data are plentiful. Comparable scores across time for knowledge in specific content areas are much harder to find, so it is difficult to assess E. D. Hirsch's complaint that so few people today know what vitually everyone used to know, from Shakespeare to Ullyses S. Grant. The New York Times sponsored a history quiz in 1976 and was able to compare the results with identical items posed to a similar population in the 1940s. Young people knew about the same small stock of information at both dates. Recently a more comprehensive review of the available assessments in history knowledge has been conducted, with the same result: no decline over time.[54] One reason for the illusion of decline is that if people like Hirsch are comparing high school students in the 1930s with high school students in the 1990s, they are comparing 50 percent of the age-group then with 95 percent of the age-group now.

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[51] Kaestle, et al, Literacy, p. 91.

[52] National Commission on Excellence in Education, A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform (Washington: U.S. Department of Education, 1983), p. 11/

[53] Mullis and Jenkins, Reading Report Card, p. 20.

Many commentators are coming to the view that the main problem is not decline. It is that we are not meeting new, more demanding goals. The Resnicks underlined "the novelty of our present situation." Commenting on the "back-to-basics" movement, they say, "there is little to go back to in terms of pedagogical method, curriculum, or school organization. The old tried and true approaches, which nostalgia prompts us to believe might solve current problems, were designed neither to achieve the literacy standard sought today nor to assure successful literacy for everyone."[55] Irwin Kirsch and his associates write that "during the last 200 years, our nation's literacy skills have increased dramatically,," but that there have been "periods when demands seemed to surpass levels of attainment. Today although we are a better educated and more literate society than at any other time in our history, we find ourselves in one of these periods of imbalance."[56] And in the American Federation of Teachers' magazine recently the editors commented that the crisis in American education "is not, as has been suggested, the result of 'decline' from some Golden Age, since if a Golden Age ever existed it existed only for the few." The schools, they judged "are educating more students and more difficult students to levels attained in earlier times by only a small and favored group." The problem, rather, is that the schools are not doing well enough to meet our needs and not doing well enough in relation to other industrialized nations.[57]

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[54] New York Times, May 2-4, 1976; Dale Whittington, "What Have Our 17-Year-Olds Known in the Past?" American Education Research Journal (Winter, 1992), 776-778.

Obviously, the impression of decline has been heightened by the anxieties about America's standard of living and role in the world, and by our sometimes forgetting that we have raised our goals. We now aim for knowledge-based, critical literacy for all adults. That goal is daunting enough in itself; but it is complicated by two further matters about what and whose literacy we are talking about. The debate about

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[55] Resnick and Resnick, "Nature of Literacy," pp. 384, 385.

[56] Kirsch, Jungeblut and Campbell, Beyond the School Doors, p.2.

[57] The editors, American Educator (Winter, 1992), pp. 19-20.

"empty" or "content-free" skills versus content-based knowledge raised the issue of standards: do we believe in some some traditions and some knowledge that can properly be attached to literacy in the United States? If so, what are they? If we define literacy this way, to include the traditions and cultural context in which one learns to read, the national adult literacy issue becomes even more complex; for it is then not just a matter of achieving necessary levels of ability, but a matter of finding the appropriate knowledge and traditions to create both coherence and inclusiveness, common ground and a sense of ownership, received knowledge and active participation.

The content and context of literacy have in the past been decided implicitly at the state and local level by school curricula and lesson plans and at the national level by textbooks and other teaching materials. There has often been dialogue and disagreement about the curriculum on grounds of cultural diversity, and the mainstream curriculum of American schools has gradually and partially accommodated more diverse viewpoints and traditions as it evolved. Analogously, adult literacy educators have periodically attempted to adopt materials related more realistically to the lives of their clients.

Recently the debate about curricular diversity has heated up. Two polar opposites are depicted. Those who believe the schools' curricula are too narrow say they are based on a glacially evolving male Western tradition, which leaves out a lot of people; those who think the schools have already given too much ground to diversity say that the cacaphony of cultures leave too little common ground to develop tolerance, common political principles, and common social commitment. No one seems to have found the magic formula for adjudicating a compromise between these extremes, in the present cultural and political environment, but ultimately it is relevant to how we define effective adult literacy.

With regard to the literacy issue, advocates of diversity argue that a more pluralistic resolution is required not only because it would be fair according to our democratic, pluralistic commitments but because effective literacy training demands it. Commentators ranging from anthropologist John Ogbu to the Secretary's Commission on Necessary Skills to adult literacy expert Hannah Fingeret have recently argued that effective literacy training is impossible without attending to the culture, needs, and histories of the groups involved, and that they must be collaborators in determining the content and context of literacy.[58] School reform did not cease while this dialogue was going on. In fact school reform in the 1980s moved to the states and to an emphasis on the average abilities of the whole school population, not on the educational needs of particular groups. While the controversies over diversity brewed in the background, many activist governors and top school chiefs assumed that there was sufficient consensus about common content and that the problem was to get the schools to focus on it. They believed that the problem was not what to teach but a lack of resolve, discipline, and resources. The 1980s state reforms attempted to rededicate schools to academic learning through new state requirements, including periodic testing and more courses for high school graduation. They provided new funds, including better teacher salaries, and in many states, new teacher certification requirements. In some states, future teachers were required to take more liberal arts courses, maintain higher grade-point averages, and pass mandatory writing tests. At its best, the widespread, state-level education reform said two things: that every student was expected to learn and that schools needed more resources. The results of these reforms were not dramatic; test scores were not turned around, schools were not transformed. It perhaps a measure of the urgency of the reform impulse that the lack of quick results from the state reforms did not deflate the reform movement; rather, it pushed it energetically in two new directions. Thus, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, many states and individual school districts took up the piece of the mid-1980s agenda that had been least implemented because it was the most difficult: school restructuring. In Dade County, Florida, in Chicago, in New York, and in far-flung small cities like Easton, Pennsylvania and Appleton, Wisconsin, educators actually reversed the historically potent trend to centralized control of schools and experimented with "site-based management," involving more decision-making authority for building principals, teachers and parents. The expectation was that control belonged closer to the community and the classroom, and that decentralization would energize schools and focus resources on improved learning. It is too early to tell yet whether restructuring will lead to better learning. If it does, it will be relevant to the goal of effective, high-level adult literacy.

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[58] John U. Ogbu, "Understanding Cultural Diversity and Learning," Educational Researcher 21 (November, 1992), 5-14; Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, Learning A Livbing: A Blueprint for High Performance (Washington: U.S. Department of Labor, 1992); Hannah A. Fingeret, "Changing Literacy Instruction: Moving Beyond the Status Quo," in Forrest P. Chisman and associates, eds., Leadership for Literacy: The Agenda for the 1990s (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1990), pp. 25-50.

At the same time, and in striking contrast, a movement gained momentum to create not just national goals but national assessments and national standards concerning those goals. Pursued by new agencies such as the National Council on Educational Standards and Testing, the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, and the National Education Goals Panel, as well as some existing organizations like the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the movement seeks to specify in some detail what the national goals mean, how they could be measured, and what levels of competence are needed to function well in American society today.

The movement for national standards and assessment faces several obstacles. Given our traditions of local and state control of curriculum, Congress has been hesitant to get involved in curriculum issues, so the federal government's role in the standards effort has been modest and ambivalent. Second, the energetic move toward decentralization experiments, as noted above, stands in contrast to the national standards movement. Third, there is widespread dissatisfaction with traditional paper-and-pencil testing; better assessment is on the horizon, but it appears expensive and unproven. Thus the movement toward a set of national goals, assessments, and standards has been controversial even though it has been pursued in a noncoercive way. Still, the call for national education goals and assessment has much appeal in government and business circles where currently fashionable "quality" management theories demand carefully established goals and carefully measured progress.

The emphasis on standards and assessment is directly relevant to the goal of effective adult literacy. Neither the teachers of elementary and secondary schools nor the educators who work in adult literacy training can proceed very effectively toward better critical adult literacy skills without more consensus on how to define and measure necessary adult literacy skills. We do not yet have such agreement. Some have argued that the school language curriculum is not structured to foster the kind of reading skills that adults need.[59] Others have argued that the school-to-work link is weak in the United States, and that the literacy and thinking skills learned in schools should be aligned with those needed in the workplace.[60]

There are several dangers inherent in such attempts to align school learning with general adult literacy tasks or with workplace roles. With regard to school literacy and adult literacy, the authors of The Subtle Danger urged educators to "reconsider the literary emphasis in the K-12 reading curriculum" and find a place for "the literacy skills students sorely lack-- skills of logic, inference, and synthesis." [61] Assistant Secretary of Education Chester Finn sounded the alarm for the traditional curriculum, calling the report an "insidious" and "misguided" attempt to subvert the teaching of literature in favor of trivial everyday tasks and diluted standards.[62] One challenge, then, is to overcome the resistance from people who want the schools to do a better job with the traditional curriculum, not to change towards a better fit with adult roles The second problem to avoid is the very trivialization they allege. Any attempt to have schools teach children more effectively for adult roles runs the risks of merely presenting children with formulaic solutions to concrete adult tasks. As Kirsch and his associates argue, we do not need programs in which "discrete functional tasks, such as filling out a job application form or using a bus schedule" are "referred to as competencies that are then taught in isolation." We need, instead, to uncover, analyze, and teach the "ordered set of skills and strategies" that seem to be needed to accomplish reading involving narrative, documents, and numerical work.[63]

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[59] Richard L. Venezky, "The Origins of the Present-Day Chasm Between Adult Functional Literacy Needs and School Literacy Instruction," Visible Language 16 (1982), 113-126. and Richard Venezky, Carl F. Kaestle, and Andrew Sum, The Subtle Danger: Reflections on the Literacy Abilities of American Youth (Princeton: Educational Testing Service, 1986).

[60] For example, Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages! (Rochester: National Center on Education and the Economy, 1990), Chapter 7; and Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, Learning A Living,p. 51.

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[61] Venezky, Kaestle, and Sum, Subtle Danger, p.43.

[62] Chester Finn, "'None Too Subtle Danger' Lurking Within New Report," Education Week, March 11, 1987.

Those who have recently called for a tighter school-to-work connection will do well to study the history of vocational education. Throughout the twentieth century, vocational education within the schools has run the risk of bad predictions of two different sorts. First, schools have made predictions about individual students' future vocational roles. If one is going to train students in school for adult work, it is very difficult to escape these sorts of predictions, which in turn tend to stratify the curriculum and preempt decisions students should be making for themselves, at later stages. The second area of wrong predictions is that schools have had to select occupational training programs, on the hunch that they would be stable enough and profitable enough to provide jobs for students trained in them. These predictions have not typically turned out well.[64] The solution to these problems, now proposed by many reform commissions, is for schools to teach all children the kind of general knowledge and problem-solving abilities needed in high performance workplaces, whether in service, professional or manufacturing sectors, and then seek to link schools to specific jobs with better apprenticeshipts and other transitional

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[63] Kirsch, Jungeblut, and Campbell, Beyond the School Doors, p. 115.

[64] Larry Cuban, "Enduring Resiliency: Enacting and Implementing Federal Vocational Education Legislation," in Harvey Kantor and David B. Tyack, eds., Work, Youth, and Schooling: Historical Perspectives on Vocationalism in American Education (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982), pp.44-78; and Harvey Kantor, Learning to Earn: School, Work, and Vocational Reform in California, 1880-1930 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), pp. 142-148.

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processes beyond the school's instructional program. Both of these goals differ from traditional vocational education. The first goal, teaching general knowledge and problem-solving needed for all high-level work, is inseparable from the new adult literacy goal. In report after report during the past five years, commissions and government agencies have concluded that the American workforce needs smarter workers and that schools must be substantially redirected and restructured in order to reach that goal job.[65] Expressing the goal in terms of workplace literacy demands should not obscure the fact that precisely the same abilities-- higher-order thinking and reading skills-- are urgently needed for citizenship, at a time when public issues have become more and more complex and media coverage is typically simplistic.[66] Indeed, the very vision of a high-performance workplace, with front-line workers sharing decisions and using critical literacy skills, is itself a vision of a more democratic workplace than those of the old industrial production system, and thus the issue of adult functional literacy illuminates one connection between our economic system and our political system. Some are skeptical that high performance workplaces will ever become the norm in the American economy, but it is a forced option, made more urgent by the progress of some other nations toward the goals of high literacy and workplace reorganization. Fortunately, as difficult as the literacy goal will be to reach, it is consistent with our best political principles. Furthermore, in its insistence on high-quality literacy for all, it will have to address the prospects of disadvantaged students, who currently have a disproportionate risk of low literacy.

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[65] See, for example, Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce, America's Choice; Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, Learning A Living, William B. Johnston and Arnold E. Packer, Workforce 2000: Work and Workers for the Twenty-first Century (Indianapolis: Hudson Institute, 1987). On the complicated issue of whether jobs are becoming "smarter" or "dumber" in general, see K. I. Spenner, "The Upgrading and Downgrading of Occupations: Issues, Evidence, and Implications for Education," Review of Educational Research 55 (Summer, 1985), 125-154.

[66] Francis Schrag, Thinking and Society (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1988), pp. 127-134; W. Russell Newman, The Paradox of Mass Politics: Knowledge and Opinion in the American Electorate (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986).

The history of literacy and education in the United States, as well as every commission on literacy, education, the economy, or citizenship in the past ten years, all encourage us to interpret the Charlottesville mandate to mean that every adult should attain at least a moderate level of critical reading ability. If that is the case, we will not come very close to full realization of the goal by the year 2,000 or even by 2,010. Even if adult literacy remains a high priority, and even if schools and adult literacy training programs gain substantial new resources, this goal is the hardest of the six goals to attain in one decade, because it targets the whole age range of our population for improvement. In contrast, looking at the goal of school readiness, if we had perfect consensus, effective intervention, and ample resources, we could reach the goal in five years, because it targets children from birth to five years. Similarly, if we had perfect consensus, effective intervention strategies and ample funds, we could implement the science and math learning goals in about seventeen years because it refers to what 17-year-olds can do. But to bring the whole population of all ages closer to criticial functional literacy will take not only consensus, effective strategies, and very substantial resources, but more time.

Historically, expanding literacy has been attained by increasing the amount of schooling people had. But the schools have never attempted what is now proposed-- critical reading skills for all students-- so just having more of the same schooling will not work. It will take not just more schooling, as in the past, but more effective schooling. Even if the schools succeed in moving in that direction, it will take a few generations for those cohorts of improved readers to move up through the age structure of the population.

While we attempt to restructure the schools to provide the kind of reading and thinking skills needed for high performance work and active citizenship, it is therefore imperative that we improve and expand literacy training for adults. Even though the national average reading ability is much more likely to be affected by better schooling of children, there are at least three reasons for investing in better adult literacy training. First, it will take too long to reach our goal through the schooling of children, even if the schools succeed. We have pursued both strategies in the past and will certainly need to do so if we are to approach the new, rigorous goal of universal, high performance literacy in the meaningful, mid-term future. Second, opportunity is one of our ideals. We don't give up on people at a certain age. Indeed, now more than ever, lifelong learning is for most people a necessity of modern life.

Now is especially a time of difficult adjustments as the economy moves from a national to a global plane and from an industrial to an information base. Two generations of workers have been undergoing painful dislocation, and we need to provide them with retraining opportunities. Third, history does not imprison us. Even though adult literacy training has not affected a very large proportion of adults in the past, and thus has not affected overall literacy rates very much, it could. To do so, literacy programs need not only to expand but improve in accessibility, relevance, holding power, and integration with other services. Much good research and program innovation is taking place at present, so it is the right time to expand adult literacy services.

This historical essay has highlighted some of the complexities of literacy: that it is not just a skill but has cultural content, that it is difficult to define and to measure literacy, that it is rooted in an unequal social structure, and that solutions to adult literacy involve a dual strategy of schooling and adult training opportunities. History tells us that the goal of adult literacy enunciated at Charlottesvile is new and ambitious but has been developing for some decades, and that the process of expanding literacy, closing gaps between groups, and raising literacy expectations is continuous in the history of literacy. History cannot tell us how to reach the goal of universal, critical literacy, or whether we will have the determination and resources to continue the attempt when interest flags and the short-term results are not dramatic.

The America 2000 literacy goal was written in an audacious way.

It is an ideal to reach for, not an expectation that we can fulfill literally or completely. If we define the literacy standard rigorously, as this essay argues we should, we will certainly not reach the goal by the year 2,000. But if we could get halfway there in the next twenty years, and do it in ways that escape the biases that have historically encased literacy attainment in our society, then in my opinion-- as a citizen, not as a historian-- the country would be immensely better off for it, and the investment would be repaid, economically and morally.

CHAPTER 14

FROM "REEFER MADNESS" TO "A CLOCKWORK ORANGE"?

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According to The National Education Goals Report, "By the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning." Since the 1960s, ordinary citizens and taxpayers who disagree about many complex issues of political economy have agreed that drug abuse and violent behavior have increased among young people. For sixteen out of the first twenty years of the Gallup poll on education, first taken in 1969, the public ranked discipline as the number one problem facing the schools. Only in recent years has drug abuse replaced discipline as the leading indicator of youth's decline. So it is not surprising that efforts to curb violence, uncivil behavior, and drug abuse has gathered considerable bipartisan support among political leaders and the citizenry.[1]

The headlines of local newspapers and national magazines reveal youth's shocking capacity for self-destruction and social disorder. One's image of large cities includes Uzi-toting gang members by the thousands, high schools guarded by armed security agents and metal detectors, pubescent youth dealing drugs, and a general state of social chaos. Since an estimated 100,000 or more students reportedly carry a gun (plus other weapons) to school daily, no one is especially shocked to hear that a local teacher has been knifed, poisoned, or shot or has futilely tried to maintain order in the classroom, cafeteria, or study hall. When the East Palo Alto, California, schools recently considered a proposal to provide free insurance to help impoverished parents bury the latest teenage shooting victims, the media had its sound bite until the next tragedy appeared. A Clockwork Orange (1971) isn't just a movie anymore.[2]

Despite the seriousness of drug abuse, violence, and disorderly behavior among youth, these problems have waxed and waned since the 1940s. The belief that youth are in a perennial state of decline has its advocates, and it would be foolhardy to deny that America's youth are without their problems, some very grave. As a group, however, they hardly seem depraved. The majority of youth are decent, reasonably well behaved by most liberal definitions. Even if they have experimented with various drugs, only a small minority become addicts or a social menace. Politicians and the media have often claimed that youth exhibited particular social dysfunctions that social scientists subsequently discovered were rare or almost non-existent. The popular press, for example, still reports that alcohol consumption increased dramatically among teenagers after marijuana use declined in the late 1970s. Happily, social scientists cannot verify this non-happening, though binge-drinking among high school students, while on the decline, is still worrisome.[3]

Has violence, drug abuse, and a lack of respect for discipline come to characterize American youth in the public schools? Exactly how have Americans come to define these problems, and who has had the power to frame our understanding of them? Has there been a continual slide of moral behavior from the 1940s to the present day? Is it true that these social ills stem from the irreverent, anti-authoritarian, relativistic, civil libertarian ethos that presumably defined the 1960s, as conservative leaders frequently claim? How have Americans understood problems of discipline, drugs, violence, and public school safety since World War II? What is the prospect of making our schools safe and drug free in the coming years?

This essay first addresses the issue of creating a safe, disciplined environment free of violence, a very complicated problem since expectations of what constitutes a safe school has shifted dramatically since the 1940s. While social scientists have provided a reasonably clear portrait of the rise and fall of licit and illicit drug use among high school seniors since the 1970s, what constitutes acceptable behavior in terms of public safety has been shaped by changing political and ideological winds since World War II. No one in the 1940s, for example, kept statistics about sexual harassment or worried much about bullies, though citizens today include such considerations in a constantly expanding definition of a safe learning environment. Will a so-called conservative era whose dominant leaders since the 1980s have attacked government intrusion in people's lives produce even more surveillance and intervention in school and society?

I

That goal six of the national education goals regards safety, discipline, and drugs as closely related is understandable but misleading. A convenient way to group some social concerns, it also testifies to the popular belief, shaped by the media, that illicit drug use and public disorder are intertwined. Anti-marijuana films made in the 1930s such as Reefer Madness (1936), a cult classic in the 1960s and 1970s, were new lows in cinema history but promoted this image. Originally titled The Burning Question and then Tell Your Children, the film showed how otherwise decent high school students from respectable families literally went to pot. Puffers soon got lower grades, became implicated in murders and seedy sex affairs, and even travelled the path to insanity and suicide. Today's television reports of teenage gang-warfare in large cities and the high death toll of minority male youth involved in the drug trade only reinforces this image of drugs and violence.[4]

Although illicit drug use only became an issue of public school policy at mid-century, discipline and public safety have been hardy perennials, often unrelated to drugs. The right of teachers to whip, suspend, expel, and otherwise mete out punishments to the unruly was well established by the nineteenth century, despite the proliferation of advice books and teacher training guides that told teachers to govern through love, not fear. So many Ichabod Cranes with a switch in hand remained one stereotype of the teacher. The most famous piece of fiction about nineteenth century rural schools, Edward Eggleston's The Hoosier-Schoolmaster (1871), deals centrally with the specter of school violence. The young teacher, Ralph Hartsook, must assume the persona of a bulldog as he faces the classroom, and the prospect of fighting and hopefully defeating the strongest farm boy adds tension to the plot. To this day teachers mostly believe that corporal punishment is needed (as a final resort) to discipline the most unmanageable children and youth.[5]

Before the 1940s, discipline was often a central part of the mission of public education. Schools emphasized training in morals and character development. If necessary, corporal punishment greeted young offenders both in rural or urban schools, and the violence characteristic of the larger culture expressed itself in some classrooms, on playgrounds, and on the city streets. Hollywood heroes in the 1930s and 1940s included machine-gun happy gangsters and armed F.B.I. agents and those who slaughtered Indians. Celluloid heroes used whatever weapons were deemed necessary, though real students who fought at school mostly used fists while angry teachers spanked young bottoms with open palms or wooden paddles.

Then, as now, violence assumed many forms in school and society. At school, girls suffered ridicule as sex objects, bullies extorted money from the weak, and those regarded as most disobedient destroyed school property and defaced textbooks. Ethnic, neighborhood gangs (whose members were rarely in school or model students) terrorized some residents in the larger cities while protecting their turf. Few students carried weapons to school, however, and the civil rights of those accused of misdeeds were negligible. School administrators had the legal right and public sanction to dismiss and expel whoever they labelled troublemakers. Conservatives today understandably bemoan the passing of this golden age.

Since most teenagers until the Great Depression did not attend high school or plan to graduate, educators usually did not face the sorts of problems common after secondary school attendance became universal by the 1950s and 1960s. As the labor market for working class teenagers collapsed, high school enrollments boomed. The idea that everyone should attend and even graduate from high school transformed its academic and social mission. Before the 1950s, male youth (who commit a high proportion of all crimes as well as most teenage crimes) were disciplined by the work place, armed services, or other social institutions; now they were increasingly the schools' responsibility. When adolescent crime rose dramatically (like adult crime) in the 1960s, society increasingly indicted public schools for their inability to prevent this problem, though it was hardly of their making and thus largely beyond their control.[6]

The 1940s and 1950s witnessed a growing nervousness about school crime and disorder. Earlier generations feared juvenile delinquency, of course, but past experience did not allay contemporary concerns. During the 1940s, as more women worked outside the home and many fathers fought overseas, Congressmen, social scientists, local school administrators, and various social observers complained about youth, whose families seemed less able to control them. In testimony in 1984 before the Office of Justice and Delinquency Prevention, M. Hayes Mitchell, a school board member of the Richland County School District No. 1 in Columbia, South Carolina, offered some historical perspective. "Anyone over forty years old," he pointed out, "knows that problems of discipline and violence in schools did not begin with television, rock and roll, school desegregation, or Vietnam." In the 1940s and 1950s, however, the specter of such violence seemed terribly frightening, ostensibly new, and likely to worsen.[7]

Most discussion of school violence and classroom safety centered on teenagers and the high school. In sensational articles in the 1940s, J. Edgar Hoover, hardly an impartial observer, claimed that even teenage girls were part of a "crime wave" sweeping the nation. Congressional hearings on juvenile delinquency also made the headlines, though no one could really prove the existence of any crime wave. In the 1950s, however, nearly everyone thought that schools were undergoing massive change, and for the worse. Detecting teenage crime and violence became something of a national obsession, after uncovering communists. That crime by the young was on the rise was widely believed, though what constituted deviant behavior was quite different compared with later decades.[8]

Movies such as The Wild Ones (1953), Blackboard Jungle (1955), and Rebel Without A Cause (1955) enabled Hollywood to frame popular images of violent, troubled, insecure, hostile youth that were imitated in dozens of other films on teenagers during the decade. Marlon Brando and his motorcycle gang revealed the breakdown of social controls on the young. High school students in the

Blackboard Jungle, set in a New York City vocational school, showed beer swizzling, knife wielding gang members who assaulted teachers in an alley, attempted to rape a teacher in the library, cared little for life or property, and otherwise defied authority until a caring teacher offered some students redemption. James Dean's character, in turn, taught America that young people, even those from relatively prosperous homes, removed their coats and ties after school was dismissed and donned their blue jeans and tee-shirts, ultimately joining their peers in knife fights and dangerous drag races to prove their manhood. Youth--even fairly privileged ones--seemed unable to find social approval, love, or guidance at home or at school.[9]

Did the real world resemble the movies? Were teenagers as defiant of authority and as reckless and violent as portrayed in the popular press and in these famous films? The evidence was clearly mixed. In Congressional hearings on juvenile delinquency, much evidence emerged that made teachers, administrators, and the public nervous. Weapons--mostly knives, brass knuckles, occasionally some guns--now appeared in increasing numbers in some high schools, particularly in the larger urban areas, where ethnic and racial tensions seemed most pronounced. Leonard Bernstein captured this youth culture beautifully on Broadway in 1957 in West Side Story, also providing witty satires of popular images of juvenile delinquents.[10]

An aura and some increased reality of violence must have surrounded a small percentage of urban high schools that seemed unimaginable a generation before. At the same time, fear for public safety came from many sources. This was, after all, the era of the bomb shelter. School children everywhere practiced the art of duck and cover, as they hid under their seats upon command in practice drills, waiting for an atomic attack from the Russians. School children wore dog tags that would enable the living to identify the dead. If fear and violence pervaded America's public schools, it grew from many seeds.[11]

Dress codes remained largely enforced in the 1950s and early 1960s, though cracks in discipline at the most liberal schools slowly weakened the wall of adult authority. Still, although very little comprehensive social scientific research was completed on school crime and violence in the 1950s, teachers feared the specter of violence but hardly faced many classes as dramatized in the Blackboard Jungle in most places. Famous critics of progressive education, from historian Arthur Bestor to Admiral Hyman Rickover to President Dwight D. Eisenhower complained about the low academic quality in the schools and often blamed John Dewey and progressive educators for slack discipline. Still, it was unclear that the amount of youthful misbehavior or actual delinquency anywhere approached the level of rhetoric and hysteria surrounding it.[12]

Many students identified with the values of Holden Caulfield in J.D. Salinger's enormously popular novel, The Catcher in the Rye (1951), but neither that fact nor the popularity of comic books, rock and roll, Elvis, Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis, and other suspected sources of disorder turned most youth into violent creatures. It was also the age of tent revivals, church on Sunday, and Pat Boone.

Professional education journals at the time expressed real concern for the problem of delinquency and the prospect of unsafe schools, yet they lacked the levels of anxiety found in Congressional hearings or some Hollywood movies. A National Education Association survey in 1956 revealed that teachers had a growing fear of student misbehavior yet thought only 1 in 100 students were trouble-makers, mostly found in slum schools. Fist fights at lunch time, running in the corridors, speaking out of turn, chewing gum, throwing paper on the floor, and various traditional student indiscretions and pranks remained common complaints as they had in earlier decades. An article on "the maladjusted child" in 1952 said that "stealing and rowdyism were the most serious acts of student indiscretion" most teachers would face. And in 1957 two preeminent social scientists, experts on juvenile delinquency, had on their list of "student misbehaviors such violations as persistent inattention, carelessness, underhandedness, and smoking."[13]

Historian William Graebner, in his study of Buffalo in the 1950s, shows that the police called every assembly of youth a "gang," as if everyone hanging out on street corners was Al Capone in the making. Realizing that ethnic and neighborhood gangs did protect their turf and engage in occasional after-school rumbles, city leaders sponsored chaperoned dances for youth and tried other ways to guide youth along safe paths. As in Rebel Without A Cause, middle class parents and reformers in particular feared that youth from respectable families would be contaminated by the working class teenagers now increasingly found in high school. That certain elements of the teenage population were violent was undeniable; Buffalo police in 1960 confiscated sawed off baseball bats, lug wrenches, a pickaxe, and a transmission spine when they "headed off" one rumble. But teenage rumbles and fist fights, however brutal, had not yet escalated into gun fights, which were still mostly reserved for television and the big screen.[14]

The California Journal of Secondary Education, one of the premier educational publications, emphasized throughout the 1950s that teachers, like society, wanted schools to discipline and control as well as educate high school students. "Despite its cry for more of the 3 R's, society also wants its youth taught obedience, self control, and respect for adults, law and order," wrote one author in 1955. The editor of the journal, who that year dedicated a whole issue to the subject of juvenile delinquency, nevertheless introduced one essay by remarking that teachers routinely complained about the "Troublesome 1 Percent."[15]

Like so many other writers then and after, another contributor bemoaned the rise of a veritable youth culture, where students were heavily influenced by the peer group, created when all teens attended high school. This writer claimed that one sign of "the changing character of adolescence" was "hard to see because it is painful to tolerate. Adolescents today are prone to express resentment more fearlessly in the classroom, at home, and in public places." The editor added: "Wherever high school teachers gather, a perennial topic of complaint is discipline. Adolescents, teachers will tell you, shift erratically from apathy to rebellion." But rebellion in many schools still mostly included tossing paper wads and talking out of turn.[16]

II

As crime in general increased in American society in the 1960s and 1970s, school safety problems similarly accelerated, especially in the largest cities. A study in 1979 estimated that juvenile crime increased by 246% between 1965 and 1977, though statistical estimates varied enormously. H. Rap Brown's statement--"Violence is as American as cherry pie"--seemed particularly apt as school vandalism and personal violence increased in the 1960s and accelerated into the early 1970s. School crime then apparently levelled off, though it remains a persistent problem given the prevalence of gangs in some cities and the proliferation of cheap hand guns everywhere. Whether youth are in general more insolent and uncivil remains a matter of considerable debate.[17]

The precise causes of these trends have puzzled many thoughtful citizens, but the issue of discipline remains a matter of public concern and often political advantage. After Richard Nixon's successful "law and order" campaign in 1968, conservative Republicans and then "neo-conservative" Democrats labelled school discipline another example of social disorder from a decade of political assassinations, urban riots, and anti-war protests.

As the nation veered rightward after 1968, public opinion polls fairly consistently listed discipline as the leading problem in America's schools. "Discipline" undoubtedly had different meanings for various people, but it spoke directly to a growing belief that the youth culture was out of control. Discipline referred to so many facets of a person's demeanor and behavior that it was a moving target that defied precise description. However they voted on election day, most adults wanted safe schools where children and youth respected authority and behaved.[18]

What caused the escalation of school vandalism and violence produced limitless speculation and theorizing by lay person and expert alike. Some blamed the youth culture, liberalism, radical professors, weak-kneed adults, poverty, declining family values, racism, peer groups, communists, arbitrary teachers, fascist school administrators, irrelevant courses of study, the innately spoiled character the baby boomers, large class or school size, and all or some combination of the above. A distinguished panel of social scientists in 1974 pointed out that the sheer rise in the numbers of those between ages 14-24 in the 1960s was unprecedented in the twentieth century. Compared with the past, males in this age group (who disproportionally commit the nation's crimes) found themselves not in the work place but in school, part of the great swelling body known as the youth culture.[19]

Increased levels of violence apparently emerged from varied sources and seemed in harmony with an emerging culture of tolerance and pluralism in many schools. B. Edward McClellan's history of moral education in the schools reveals that most schools in the 1960s and early 1970s abandoned explicit training in character education and traditional ethics; society increasing believed that morals were "private" not public concerns. Similarly, adults throughout the period through their actions taught youth that authority was often illegitimate or unworthy of support and that violence at home or abroad common if not acceptable. Adult crime increased, local police and the F.B.I. arrested criminals but also harassed civil rights leaders and long-hairs, political assassinations ended peaceful campaigns for change, whites and blacks fought with words and rocks over busing and integration, and, with the crimes associated with Watergate, faith in government and its various institutions correspondingly sank. Schools were hardly immune to these profound changes.[20]

In particular, campus revolts against the war spawned new ideas about students' rights, even on the high school level, and fear of student disorder spread. The Journal of Secondary Education, a leading professional magazine, reflected the changing times. A junior high school teacher from New York City writing in 1964 claimed that "the blackboard jungle, firmly rooted in the low socio-economic areas, has already reached a stage so acute that it obtrudes in every large city across the country. . . ." He partly blamed bourgeois teachers for failing to understand the problems of poor students or how to effectively teach them.[21]

The following year another writer, already sounding anachronistic, said that school people should toss the "hoody" element out of the schools, an idea revived when Principal Joe Clark and his baseball bat made the deadlines in the 1980s. Other writers documented that discipline was becoming a severe problem in many schools, especially in urban areas, and that the unrest in the larger society had seeped into the local schools. By 1968, the Journal of Secondary Education printed an article with the revealing title: "NEEDED: A Policy for Riot Control in Schools and School Districts."[22]

Some though hardly all high school students were influenced by the wider movement for civil rights for blacks and campus revolts against the Vietnam war. Sit-ins, student boycotts, peace rallies, participation in Moratorium Day, and other examples of civil disobedience became more common in secondary schools, as young people continued to assail adult authority. The right to publish alternative student newspapers, to dress as one pleased, and to question authority was often won, through concessions or court victories, angering many conservatives and educators reared on traditional value systems. Allan Ornstein, the junior high school teacher quoted earlier but now a college professor, opined in 1970 that youth had seen through the hypocrisies of the authoritarian system and were asserting their rights, like others in the civil rights revolt. Teachers lacked "rapport" with their students and needed to make the curriculum interesting and relevant. Ornstein noted that 3 out of 5 principals polled by the National Association of Secondary School Principals said they had faced some form of "student protest" the previous year.[23]

Criticisms of insensitive, racist, thoughtless teachers were hardly novel, as anyone knew who remembered Blackboard Jungle. But a spate of best-selling books, focussed especially on cities, by such writers as Jonathan Kozol, James Herndon, and Herbert Kohl in the 1960s reflected the wider assault on authority common to the times. These writers hardly encouraged students to harm their teachers or each other or to vandalize the schools. Few teenagers read any of these books, but the levels of school violence increased, as riots, assassinations, and other forms of social disorder captured the main headlines.[24]

A National Education Association report in 1964 on school violence revealed that teachers were more anxious about personal safety than a decade before; and the first systematic national study of school vandalism, by the Office of Education in 1969, estimated that the destruction of school property alone (and not medical bills for students and teachers) exceeded $100 million annually. The N.E.A. soon raised the estimate to $200 million. The students in one crime infested Los Angeles school were so grateful to one adult--a security cop who helped restore order--that they named him "Teacher of the Year."[25]

In his comprehensive study of the Detroit schools, historian Jeffrey Mirel documents the rise of uncivil behavior by students in the local schools. Given the widespread urban riots after the assassination of Martin Luther King in 1968, what happened seemed of a piece with the times. By 1969, Mirel argues, assaults on person and property multiplied, heightening fears among local teachers. "It is impossible to catalog the number of violent incidents in the Detroit schools in this period," he writes. "Literally hundreds of incidents, including shootings, stabbings, rapes, student rampages, gang fights, assaults, arson, bombings and bomb threats, extortion, and vandalism occurred in the schools or on school property." In fact, "At several points in 1969, 1970, and 1971, Deputy Superintendent Charles Wolfe recorded incidents by the hour."[26]

It is easy to see why some citizens could fondly recall the 1950s, when teachers worried about the "Troublesome 1 Per Cent." And one can understand the public response to one of the questions asked in the first Gallup poll on public attitudes toward education in 1969: "How do you feel about the discipline in the local schools--is it too strict, not strict enough, or just about right?" Only 2% thought the schools too strict, 49% said not strict enough, 44% said it was about right, and 5% did not know or failed to answer. But the majority agreed that discipline was the "biggest problem" facing the schools, and a majority also favored more controls over student dress.[27]

By 1974, superintendents from the largest school districts helped Gallup frame its first direct questions on school vandalism and crime, a revealing indicator of what increasingly mattered to opinion makers and local leaders. When Gallup asked in 1975 whether schools should teach "morals and moral behavior" (admittedly fairly vague), 79% of those polled said yes and only 15% said no. The figures in the next decade were almost identical.[28]

III

The 1970s witnessed a spate of studies on the nature of school violence and vandalism, which government reports claimed had peaked sometime by early or mid-decade. Professional educators, social scientists, and a host of popular writers, however, continued to document the high rates of adolescent violence and crime. It was newsworthy. In 1976, National Public Radio, not known for its interest in law and order questions, opened a program on school violence with the provocative statements: "Violence and vandalism in schools are problems that won't go away. In fact, they seem to have reached crisis proportions." Guests on the program included representatives from teacher unions and the National Parent Teacher Association and various educational leaders who worried about the escalating levels of violence, despite what some reports said about the "levelling off" of crime. Similarly, a writer in the journal Adolescence claimed in 1978 that teenage crime had reached "near crisis proportions." An article that appeared in Urban Education said that the cost of school violence in 1975 equalled the cost of school textbooks in 1972![29]

Were youth feeding on an orgy of violence? Was this an accurate depiction of the schools and their students? It was clear that schools had to take precautions unknown in the 1950s and even early 1960s. By the late 1960s, security guards were already familiar outside and inside many urban schools. By the late 1970s, some city schools looked more like junior prisons than halls of learning. Not every school in a particular city had so deteriorated, and even the suburbs and rural schools, while generally safer, were hardly free from crimes against person and property.

There were abundant examples of the escalating problems. Administrators placed closed circuit televisions in a junior high school in Dallas; Parma, Ohio, installed a "radar alarm system" in a school "not to assist in the apprehension of vandals" but to try to frighten potential vandals from destroying school property; intercom systems that detected "unusual noises (e.g. shattering glass)" were placed in the Jefferson County, Kentucky, schools; and Kennedy High School in Sacramento, California, had a sophisticated "attendance register system," created with the help of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Administrators would continue to employ high technology in efforts to outsmart youthful thieves, delinquents, and trouble makers. And two government reports on school violence and vandalism, in 1975 and 1977, provided the media with many tantalizing examples of the countless ways of errant youth.[30]

Senator Birch Bayh of Indiana, a liberal Democrat, chaired the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency in the early 1970s, issuing a report whose findings were repeatedly cited in popular and professional magazines: Our Nation's Schools--A Report Card: 'A' in School Violence and Vandalism. Noting that in one 1964 survey teachers said only 3% of their students were "discipline problems," Bayh opened his report with his concern about the "rising level of student violence and vandalism in our nation's public school systems." Gone were the days, he said, when fist fights between students or occasional misbehavior only disrupted classroom routine; the school was no longer a haven from the various forms of violence in the larger society. "Instead our schools are experiencing serious crimes of a felonious nature including brutal assaults on teachers and students, as well as rapes, extortions, burglaries, thefts, and an unprecedented wave of wanton destruction and vandalism."[31]

The evidence presented in the report was sobering and not always so hyperbolic. Though most of the violence and vandalism was concentrated in the largest urban school systems, Bayh emphasized that the problems were not restricted to major cities. In 1964, 15% of the teachers sampled by the N.E.A. reported having been assaulted by a student; a survey in 1973 put the figure at 37%. At the same time, most crimes were committed by students against students. Moreover, most school systems had neither teachers nor administrators with sufficient experience or appropriate training to respond effectively to this new wave of student disorder, which drained the resources of the school, detracted from teachers' ability to instruct their students, and weakened everyone's morale. Albert Shanker, head of the American

Federation of Teachers, testified that most school crimes went unreported, since the traditional view of a school was an orderly one; to admit that violence and disorder prevailed was to a teacher or principal an admission of abject failure and a field day for local newspaper reporters waiting for a scandal.[32]

According to various studies cited in Bayh's report, school vandalism and violence rose dramatically in the 1960s and continued its ascent. 90% of all school districts in the country regularly reported broken glass and windows; schools reported more arson, burglaries, and attacks on both persons and property; and gang activity seemed acute in particular cities. New York City reported 10,000 school crimes in 1973, and it was estimated that 30-60% of the actual number there remained unreported. Sixteen shootings marred the school year in Kansas City, Missouri. To highlight the problem, Bayh described how one innocent girl in Detroit was beaten up and stabbed by 30 classmates, allegedly due to "a feeling among the students that the victim was more attractive and had better grades." Some urban schools in the South were called "armed camps."[33]

All this made great news, feeding the notion of general social disorder and chaos in the public schools. Soon after Bayh's committee issued its findings, the National Institute of Education published its own study, following a request by Congress in 1974 to examine the nature and extensiveness of school crime and violence. Published in 1977, Violent Schools-Safe Schools (often called the 'Safe School Study') provided a wealth of information on student misbehavior, findings that were cited with different degrees of accuracy in the popular media, depending on the political or emotional effect desired.

"Are crime and violence more prevalent in schools today than in the past?" asked the authors of this report. "The evidence from a number of studies and official sources indicates that acts of violence and property destruction in schools increased throughout the 1960s to the early 1970s and levelled off after that." School principals surveyed between 1971 and 1976 did not record any dramatic increase in crime during those years, though it had already reached a high level compared with the past. Sometimes downplayed or ignored in summaries in the popular press, the "Safe School Study" claimed that only 8% of all schools had serious problems with violence and vandalism. Most though not all of these schools were in the largest cities.[34]

Petty theft was common everywhere. 2.1% of all junior high school students were assaulted each month, compared with 1% of all high school students. These statistics seemed small, but they generated a climate of fear and intimidation for everyone, especially when coupled with other youthful indiscretions against property and person. The typical high school student had "about 1 chance in 9 in having something stolen in a month; 1 chance in 80 or being attacked; and 1 chance in 200 of being robbed." Most crime was directed by white pupils against other whites, or blacks against blacks, though interracial crime was not uncommon. The study concluded that the racial or ethnic composition of the student body was not a very good predictor of whether violence occurred in a particular school, "once other factors, such as the amount of crime in the neighborhood, are taken into account."[35]

About 12% of all secondary school teachers were robbed of something worth over $1 each month; 0.5% were physically attacked each month, a small percentage of the 1 million secondary school teachers, though 19% of the attacks required medical treatment. Again, the small percentages belied its huge impact. Teachers understandably often felt unsafe in some schools, whether in the classroom, halls, bathrooms, stairwells, or parking lots. Rural schools were the safest for teachers and students, large cities the most unsafe.[36]

Schools had long suffered financial losses and the obvious aggravations associated with the destruction of property, and these problems remained very serious according to the Safe School Study. Trespassing, breaking and entering, window smashing, and the like were common; there was a 1 in 4 chance that every school in the nation would experience vandalism in a given month. The best estimates for the costs of vandalism nationally was somewhere between $100-$200 million.[37]

Since only a small percentage of property crimes were reported to police, estimates of actual crime varied enormously. 1% of all school districts included in the study had police stationed in the schools, though 15% of the large cities did. But the use of security alarms, paddling (especially in the junior high schools), and other efforts to deter or punish crime increased in response to the growth of school crime and vandalism in the 1970s. Costs for personal injury or destruction of property so swelled that the vast majority of states passed laws by the late 1970s making parents legally responsible for their children's behavior at school. The capacity of schools to act in loco parentis had been weakened.[38]

IV

Some commentators quipped in the 1980s that many schools had been designed when chewing gum was perceived as a major problem. Still, the public system responded to the continual problems of violence and vandalism with a host of preventive programs and invested heavily in security measures to contain the violence spilling out of neighborhoods and communities into some of the worst schools. The Republican Party of Ronald Reagan and George Bush linked a lack of discipline with low school achievement. The widely discussed report, A Nation at Risk (1983), helped convince many people that schools needed to reform in part by emphasizing personal responsibility and school achievement.[39]

The party of law and order, the Republicans revived familiar and popular concerns about social order and respect for tradition and authority; conservatives routinely criticized schools for failing to end violence and vandalism yet simultaneously refused to advocate the control or better regulation of cheap hand guns or assault weapons. Reagan did, however, establish a National School Safety Center in 1983 to disseminate information on how to make schools safer. It was located in that cauldron of urban violence, Malibu.[40]

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, teachers and administrators worked diligently to create safe schools for children in some of the most violent neighborhoods in the country as well as those around the corner. Studies of high schools in the 1980s revealed that problems of violence toward person and property remained relatively high, considering the drop in school enrollments, though some reduction in crime apparently occurred after the levels stabilized in the 1970s. Scholars studying contemporary schools emphasized that even when the level of violence declined, compared to the dangerous conditions in many gang-infested streets, the effects of periodic as well as systemic crime on children and teachers could have a chilling effect. Far too many students were afraid to come to school, walk down certain halls, go to the school bathroom, cross certain playgrounds or streets, and were thus truly victimized by the uncivil behavior of their peers.[41]

Historian Michael Sedlak and his colleagues in a study of the determinants of high school achievement noted in 1986 that many factors--from the influence of peers to home environment to poor teaching methods and programs--seemed to influence the high rates of vandalism. Whatever the causes, the uncivil behavior of many adolescents remained striking. "Although the decline in violent behavior by those who attend school is heartening," they wrote, "this does not mean that tardiness, classroom disruptions, and failure to do homework exact no serious toll on the level of content learning in schools. On the contrary, the widespread occurrence of rudeness and incivility signal a lack of respect of involvement in learning which can have a devastating effect on teacher morale." Like the characters in a Clint Eastwood or Charles Bronson movie, youth worked outside the established system of rules and regulations.[42]

Since the late 1970s, even critics of the public schools have often rediscovered that violence is a widespread phenomenon in American life and the lifeblood of Hollywood. (Armed conflict was seen as preferable to an embargo in the recent Gulf War.) According to a study of violence published in 1988, children on average saw an estimated 18,000 murders on television by the time they graduated from high school; and newspapers, movies, and children's games and toys often glorified violence. The spread of cheap hand guns and then the availability of assault rifles made violence a more deadly activity, though schools in many neighborhoods were often much safer than children's homes and neighborhoods. That was little comfort to teachers and students who were victimized, of course, but understanding this helps set the problems of contemporary school violence and vandalism in a broader context. Very few children were killed or violently hurt at school, for example, compared with the city streets.[43]

"Target hardening"--making one's school safer from assault or vandalism--became a common phrase, and security measures accelerated in the schools in the 1980s and early 1990s. More and more school programs were established to help teach children about the evils of violent behavior and how to help victims cope with their anger or sense of loss when social disorder triumphed. The National School Safety Center distributed pamphlets, newsletters, and assorted materials that showed administrators and teachers how to prevent school crime and provided examples of effective or experimental curricular programs. Hardening the target was obviously appealing to many schools that felt under siege.[44]

The Center's School Discipline Notebook, published in 1987, quoted Ronald Reagan on the importance of learning discipline, especially self-discipline, at school. "Who better to teach the student respect for rules--his principal or someday, the police?" Emphasizing that school crime like other crimes seemed to increase, the Notebook emphasized the importance of having a well ordered school with clear and well enforced rules on behavior and pupil demeanor. In addition to providing examples of sound policies for any school--rules on how to walk in the halls, how to care for your textbooks, and so forth--it offered a chilling reminder of the worst forms of student behavior, though the most violent acts remained isolated for the most part in a very small percentage of schools. "No student knowingly shall possess, handle, or transmit any knife, razor, ice pick, explosive, loaded cane, sword cane, machete, pistol, rifle, shotgun, pellet gun, metal knuckles, or other object that reasonably can be considered a weapon or dangerous instrument in any school building, on any school premises, on any school bus or off the school grounds at any school related activity, event, or function."[45]

The School Safety Checkbook, in its second printing by 1990, similarly emphasized that higher levels of school achievement depended upon safer learning environments. Schools facing or anticipating violence and vandalism were encouraged to follow some simple rules: to keep gravel off the school yard, to remove door handles from all but the front doors, to consider investing in more security devices or police, to only plant trees 10' from a building to deter break-ins, to "place prickly plantings" near sidewalks to cut down on "pedestrian traffic," to "add barbed wire to the top of chain link fencing that could serve as a ladder to upper floors or roofs," to close campuses, to add heavy padlocks to gates, to replace glass windows with plexiglass, and so forth. This may have sounded Orwellian, if not Kafka-esque, yet they reflected the extreme precautions a minority of public schools followed in response to persistent levels of school crime and violence.[46]

The sources of social disorder within schools had multiple causes: racial and class conflict in areas faced with unpopular court-ordered busing, the rising gang problems in major cities such as Los Angeles, the collapse of economic opportunities and stable families for minority males, eroding economic opportunities for working class youth generally in a service economy, and the whole host of familiar problems known to educators through the millennia. The proliferation of cheap hand guns in the 1980s made the lives of children and youth more precarious, as the teenage death toll by guns soared. For some males owning a gun symbolized a rite of passage.

Urban schools responded by purchasing more sophisticated security hardware and hiring more policemen (often called "security agents") and by banning gang colors, hats, and other insignia. A few administrators met fire with fire. Some systems also increasingly required offenders to report to the "Student Adjustment Center" for counseling or various behavior clinics to try to correct their problems. Briefly, Principal Joe Clark of the Eastside High School in Patterson, New Jersey, became a national hero and Republican favorite by expelling as many trouble makers as possible and threatening hoodlums with his famous baseball bat. The movie based on his life had more in common with Rambo than Goodbye, Mr. Chips.[47]

Given the extensiveness of school violence and crime in the 1980s, it is hardly surprising that administrators advocating law and order would gain some support and publicity. Having a safe, violent-free school where children and youth have an opportunity to learn is supported by most Americans. That some individuals would simply get tough with youth ignored alternative approaches but reflected the desperate situation for children forced to attend certain schools, especially in urban areas. The incidence of vandalism and violence was and remains highest in cities, lower in suburbia, and still lower in rural America, where social homogeneity is greatest. But violence is widely perceived as rampant, no longer restricted to the largest cities where the problems seem most intractable.

Certainly the battle zone-like environments in which many poor, minority youth live in major cities is shocking. As Republicans frequently pointed out, minority youth would especially benefit from a reduction of school crime; black youth were three times as likely to be victimized and Hispanic youth twice as likely as whites. City school systems repeatedly form commissions and study groups to try to find ways to curb violence and vandalism and to bring more dignity and learning into the lives of students. With over 100,000 youth per day bringing weapons to school, this is hardly a paranoid response. Metal detectors, now common in many urban high schools in major cities, offends one's sense of propriety but reflects the high stakes of personal safety for students and teachers.[48]

A "Behavior/Discipline Task Force Study" completed for the Indianapolis public schools in 1988 revealed social pathologies regrettably familiar to most urban teachers and school administrators across the country. Children were often noisy and disobedient riding buses, too often swearing, fighting, and causing problems for themselves and others. A survey of junior and senior high school students revealed that 71% had seen students carrying knives to school, 25% guns, 25% nun chucks, 33% Chinese throwing stars, and so forth. Nearly all the teachers and administrators thought that personal I.D. badges with "photos and names" were needed for all staff, teachers, and pupils. Over half of the students surveyed did not think their teachers had control over their classrooms, especially on the high school level.[49]

The increasingly violent nature of student behavior associated with guns made schools take extraordinary measures to contain school violence. Besides confiscating countless weapons from knives to guns to bombs, some urban schools invested millions of dollars in school security. The media increasingly interviewed school security directors and agents to comment on incivility in the local schools. There were many people to interview and stories to record. By 1981 the Los Angeles Unified School District already had a security force of 325. In 1988 the San Diego schools had a security staff of 46 and a budget of $1.8 million, which teachers and administrators would have preferred spending in other constructive ways. Despite all sorts of efforts on the federal, state, and especially local levels to harden targets, hundreds of millions of dollars are still spent dealing with the consequences of school violence and crime. Little wonder, then, that a cartoon in the Phi Delta Kappan in 1989 stated that the first order of business for a new high school class president was to name a secretary of defense.[60]

Though the most dramatic examples of school security are in metropolitan areas, small towns and suburbs have either increasingly reported school crime and violence more consistently than in the past or, as their spokespersons claim, are themselves much less safe than a generation ago. An estimated 3 million school crimes occurred in 1988, and obviously the vast majority of children do not attend school in major cities. A more hostile environment means that duck and cover drills have reappeared; they are called "bullet drills" in Oakland, California but "Earthquake Drills" in Mentor, Ohio. In suburban Winnetka, Illinois, once nationally known for its progressive schools, mothers took turns guarding a school following one frightening incident, and parent patrols, neighborhood watches, and other indices of schools under siege have become familiar even in leafy suburbs. This receives much less media attention than when Prince Georges' County outside Washington, D.C., installs expensive infra-red devices that detect heat and motion or when Mayor Dinkins of New York announces plans to spend another $32 million on school police and metal detectors. But they demonstrate that violence is not simply an urban dilemma but an American dilemma.[61]

If the level of violence in our schools is often less than in adjoining neighborhoods, it nevertheless restricts opportunities for everyone to enjoy school and reap its full social and intellectual benefits. Although reported levels of school crime increased in the 1960s and early 1970s and then levelled off, the amount of incivility remains higher than most citizens, especially youth compelled to attend school, desire or deserve. It is somewhat comforting to know that, of the 500 shootings of youth under the age of 16 in New York City in 1991, only 1 occurred in a local high school. But it is distressing to see, as a writer in the Christian Science Monitor recently noted, that even some suburban high schools now use hand-held metal detectors. In many cities lockers that were used to hide drugs and guns were often removed from inner city high schools in the 1970s, and the level of violence remains so unacceptable in so many types of districts that a Massachusetts legislator has proposed making "violence prevention education" mandatory.[62]

A poll of over a thousand school administrators published in 1993 revealed that urban systems have increasingly tightened local security. 20% had restricted access by outsiders to their campuses, 38% had banned gang clothing and insignia, 21% had restricted school use after hours, 17% had issued ID cards to students, 5% had installed surveillance cameras, and 6% had required common school uniforms. The percentages were generally lower but not always significantly so for suburban schools; while rural schools were the least likely to restrict student movement and freedom.[63]

Defining the legitimate requirements for social order will be severely tested in the 1990s as new interest groups redefine the definition of acceptable behavior at school. As particular school systems increasingly ban beepers, designer clothes, athletic jackets, expensive shoes and other apparel and worry about how to make buildings and people safe, they will also be pressured to respond to the problem of the school bully and to those who harass and especially sexually harass their peers.

How to respond to the school bully became a growing concern in the 1980s. The National School Safety Center helped publicize this rediscovery of a old problem with Set Straight on Bullies in 1989. According to Stuart Greenbaum of the Center, "Bullying is perhaps the most underrated problem in our schools today. Synonymous with fear and anxiety, bullying distracts minds and inhibits the learning process. If the problem goes unchecked, it can destroy lives and put society at risk." An estimated 10% of the school population were bullies or victimized by them. Like the fear generated by the presence of a weapon in class, bullies had long been a familiar feature in schools but now apparently deserved more attention. In an age more sensitive to victims' rights, some writers emphasized that bullies not only had a disproportionate chance of becoming a juvenile delinquent but also denied many children their right to personal safety and security in an effective learning environment.[54]

Reform-minded scholars, recognizing that violent crimes were relatively rare in the public schools, noted that a host of other, once-overlooked offenses deserved more attention and correction. Though the media fed the public an image of schools filled with gun-wielding adolescents, "minor victimizations and indignities" were in fact far more common though depressingly routine. "A student who is coerced into surrendering the Twinkies in his/her lunchbox to a school bully is, by strict definition, a victim of robbery," wrote three contributors to the Journal of Quantitative Criminology in 1987. Apprentice thieves and thugs defaced buildings, stole their classmate's pens and pencils, engaged in verbal abuse and teasing, and instead of using guns expressed their creativity with "rocks, baseball bats, metal bars, spray-paint cans, scissors, screw-drivers, and (presumably large) lollipops."[55]

Under the auspices of the National School Safety Center, Harvard University hosted the first Schoolyard Bullying Practicum in 1987. The communications director of the Center, Stuart Greenbaum, stated without evidence that bullying was an "escalating" problem, explaining that victims in extreme cases were driven to suicide. Whether being forced to deal with bullies was a "normal" part of growing up became a matter of debate. "Adults who would not tolerate physical abuse or verbal attacks on the streets should not treat such behavior lightly when it occurs in the schoolyard among younger people. If ignored, it will perpetuate itself," Greenbaum argued. More monitoring and correction was needed for those who were bullies and more sympathy and help for their victims. Bullying took many forms: "name-calling, petty theft, extortion of lunch money, harsh pranks, ethnic slurs, assault, sexual molestation, rage, or just minor jostling in school corridors. . . ."[56]

By the early 1990s, following the confirmation hearings of Clarence Thomas to the U.S. Supreme Court, the issue of sexual harassment increasingly loomed larger in the schools. Studies appeared that claimed that sexual harassment from the elementary grades through high school effectively denied female students reasonable opportunities to learn. By 1993 two states--California and Minnesota--required mandatory sexual harassment training in the schools. California voters had already approved a citizens' bill of rights referendum in the 1980s that included children's right to a safe school; and California law permits the expulsion of those in fourth grade and higher if found guilty as charged. Critics question whether errant young children should be treated so punitively, but this captures well the power of victims' rights lobbies, whether led by conservative Republicans or liberal feminists. One student in California who was cruelly taunted by classmates since eighth grade later settled out of court for $20,000 after suing a local district for not protecting her from harassment.[57]

The philosophy that 'boys will be boys' and that dealing with confrontation is a normal part of growing up remains central to debates about how to respond to these new concerns about old problems. How to control bullies and boys and girls who harass each other verbally as well as physically has been added to the many other responsibilities of the schools. Hundreds of millions of dollars are now spent to protect property and life and limb; how to inject more civility in the schools, between students and students, and students and teachers, is apparently the next frontier in the campaign for safe schools. The Yonkers school superintendent who recently described serious allegations of playground violence against several young children as nothing more than "rough-housing" (and "nothing unusual for the school playground") may soon sound anachronistic.[58]

Newspapers, magazines, and television shows frequently feature the pathological and usually atypical examples of school vandalism and violence that can plague particular schools. When middle school pupils in Lorain, Ohio, plot to stab their teacher and classmates wager bets on the outcome, when little children in a

Georgia suburb conspire to kill their teacher, when L.A. establishes an 'anti-gun' curriculum, or when New York creates a 'grieving room' in a high school for students to mourn dead classmates, one can easily forget that the typical mischievous student is guilty only of rudeness and garden variety incivilities. Most do not carry weapons to school or assault teachers or each other, though those who regularly terrorize their schools or classmates seem oblivious to most forms of sensitivity training or expensive efforts at target hardening.[59]

V

Violence and vandalism in the schools obviously has assumed many different forms historically and has many complex roots. High school teachers and principals emphasize that even in inner city high schools, where drug related gang problems can be deadly, many male students fight over sneakers, shoes, pride, presumed insults to their manhood, girl friends, jewelry, and other accoutrements of the good life. Without discounting the contributing influence of drug use and turf wars over drug sales upon public safety in school and society, the establishment of a safe and disciplined learning environment would remain difficult even if we inhabited a drug-free world.

But exactly how serious is the drug problem generally in America's schools and among adolescents? What explains the widespread increase in the use of drugs by youth in the 1960s and

1970s, their relative decline in use since then, and the personal and social risks that continue to result from their use? If our society is not Reefer Madness writ large, drug use among American adolescents is still the highest in the industrialized world. Though rates of adolescent use of marijuana, alcohol, and cigarettes has declined since the late 1970s, the levels of abuse, like that of school violence and vandalism, are much higher than was true in the 1950s. That drug use overall has declined does not mean that it is not a matter of legitimate public concern.

Alcohol and cigarette smoking are the most common forms of licit drug use among adolescents. But considerable media attention has focussed on marijuana since large numbers of white middle class youth first began using it in the late 1960s and early 1970s, when it became more widespread among teens of all social classes. Like violence, drug use has an old history, has taken many different forms, and has been periodically redefined by those in positions of authority.

When the lower classes use particular drugs it is often regarded as deviant behavior; when the middle classes are flying higher on the same drug if becomes a medical problem or item of sociological note. About 1 of every 400 Americans was addicted to opium or its derivatives in the early twentieth century, caused by the widespread use and lack of regulation over the consumption of patent medicines (which often had considerable alcohol) and various pain remedies and elixirs for 'women's complaints.' The addicts--often middle class white women--were not regarded as criminals or deviants.[60]

During the same period, marijuana was smoked largely by rural agricultural laborers in the Southwest and South, especially Mexican immigrants or Mexican-Americans; its usage spread in rural areas among other poor rural groups by the 1920s and to northern urban areas as millions migrated from the South. Federal narcotics laws in 1914 began to regulate patent medicines, and the Federal Bureau of Narcotics, formed in 1930, helped lead the campaign against marijuana use, which spread among the lower classes and among some artists and musicians in the urban north. By 1937 the law levied steep fines for possessing even small amounts of marijuana.[61]

Marijuana use continued among the urban lower classes in the 1940s and 1950s and, as revealed so graphically in The Autobiography of Malcolm X, among some members of the jazz community. Beat writers such as Allen Ginsburg and Ken Kesey publicized their drug experiments in the 1950s, before a Harvard professor popularized the value of tuning in, turning on, and dropping out, and high school officials increasingly worried that a "narcotics problem" would soon engulf some towns and cities. Although some contributors to the California Journal of Secondary Education believed that the media thrived on sensational articles about juvenile delinquency, violence, and narcotics, some educators in the 1950s worried about dope peddlers and the prospect of teenage addicts.[62]

Since marijuana was cheap, easily purchased, and lucrative, claimed one writer in 1952, reefer madness might be just around the corner. Wherever students congregated in the cities, drug pushers could be found. "Nearby malt shops and hamburger stands, frequented by a small group of trouble-makers within a school, provide a convenient meeting place," he warned. And, he added, too many people naively assumed that only Mexican-Americans smoked marijuana, whereas drug use had wider appeal.[63]

These fears, like those of mass-scale juvenile delinquency, appeared largely unfounded, until the 1960s. Marijuana use among adolescents then accelerated and continued its steady increase until about 1978 and 1979, when its use peaked, and then continued to decline in the 1980s and early 1990s. As one scholar has written, "A major change in drug use patterns occurred in the mid-1960s, when young people, particularly white middle-class students, began smoking marijuana and taking nonnarcotic drugs such as barbiturates, tranquilizers, amphetamines, and hallucinogens for their euphoric effects." Some public school students had long been suspected of getting high sniffing airplane glue, but marijuana became the most widely used drug after alcohol and tobacco by the 1960s.[64]

In a decade marked by the rise of a counter-culture, peace movement, and youth culture in opposition to the authority of the "establishment," marijuana lost its exclusive association with the lower classes and artistic communities and became a symbol of general student revolt. Experts attending a conference on narcotics abuse in the White House in 1962 could hardly anticipate the enormous changes about to occur. By 1968, even the Journal of Secondary Education felt the need to publish an entire symposium on drugs and their uses, and the first national conference on drug abuse in high schools met the following year.[65]

The increase in marijuana use was dramatic, though estimates varied. A Gallup Poll in 1967 claimed that 6% of youth had tried marijuana; by 1974 the figure reportedly skyrocketed to 60%. Not surprisingly, after citing a study claiming that 10% of Michigan high school students in one sample used marijuana one or more times, the editor of the Journal of Alcohol and Drug Education asserted in 1969 that "the challenge to educate youth more effectively about substances that modify mood and behavior still stands." The ineffectiveness of many drug prevention programs, however, would remain a common complaint in the coming decades.[66]

In an article in 1978 entitled "The Drug Abuse Decade," a physician writing for the Journal of Drug Issues noted that marijuana use had now spread from a "relatively isolated ethnic minority and bohemian populations to all American youth." If not everyone tried or used marijuana, the majority did. An array of studies on adolescents and drugs appeared in the 1970s, documenting the incredible rise in drug abuse. One researcher estimated that "lifetime marihuana use [was] at least 20 percent higher among those 14-34 in 1977 than their counterparts in 1971," with the highest usages among those under the age of 21. And the usage rate in 1971, of course, was substantially higher than it had been in 1961 or 1951.[67]

Teenagers who hated cutting the grass increasingly enjoyed smoking it, fueling the popularity of Cheech and Chong's first movie, Up in Smoke (1978). Two years later, a scholarly essay claimed that this generation of youth had "Gone to Pot." "Teachers and administrators at many high schools and junior high schools in urban and suburban neighborhoods frequently find one or more small groups of students, especially at lunch hour, smoking marijuana outside the school building. Inside the school, marihuana fumes are frequently encountered in bathrooms, staircases, and in other isolated areas." Though marijuana use remained high compared to other major industrialized nations, its use, which had dramatically spread among high school students, actually peaked around 1978-1979.[68]

Those sampled by the Gallup Poll fairly consistently regarded discipline as the largest problem facing local schools. By the late 1970s, however, drug abuse followed right behind discipline in the rankings, remaining in second place except for one year until 1986, when for the first time it was regarded as the leading problem in the schools. It remained at the top or near the top of the list of major problems facing schools in the coming years. This was true despite evidence that adolescent use of all illicit drugs, including marijuana and other illegal substances, as well as licit drugs, like drinking and cigarette smoking, began to decline for the most part after the late 1970s.[69]

Because drug use among American adolescents is relatively high compared with the 1950s and early 1960s and astronomical compared to other major industrialized nations, writers could continue to write about the drug "epidemic" plaguing the nation long after the problem reached its zenith. This tended to discount improvements in self-discipline among adolescents regarding drug use, however much the hyperbole about an "epidemic" enabled politicians to call for more law and order or the citizenry to remain vigilant about substance abuse. The Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan, however, has charted the behavior of high school seniors concerning drugs from 1975 to the present through grants from the National Institute on Drug Abuse. Its findings show that in the Class of 1990 lifetime marijuana use (and daily use rates) was the lowest since the Class of 1975.[70]

In 1990, marijuana remained "the most widely used illicit drug with 41%" of seniors "reporting some use in their lifetime, 27% reporting some use in the past year, and 14% reporting some use in the past month." To highlight the change, 60% of the Class of 1979 had reported using marijuana in their lifetime. Other less frequently used illicit drugs also show declining rates of lifetime usage. Between 1975 and 1990, lifetime rates for seniors declined for hallucinogens (16.3% to 9.4%), tranquilizers (17% to 7.2%), heroine (2.2% to 1.3%), and sedatives (18.2% to 7.5%). Lifetime use of cocaine stood at 9% in 1975 and rose to 17.3% in 1984 until it declined by 1990 to 9.4%. Probably the publicity on crack cocaine and a noisy but brief "war on drugs" in Washington helped lead citizens to tell Gallup that drug abuse was the major problem facing schools in the late 1980s.[71]

As the social scientists at the University of Michigan explain, most illicit drug use is higher for males than females. Also, white youths generally use drugs more than minority youth (except for a few drugs used more extensively by blacks and Hispanics). Overall, illicit drug use is not linked to any particular socio-economic class but, compared with the 1950s and early 1960s, is pervasive. The kinds of drugs invented and made available to youth has grown over time. Although high school seniors lowered their intake of many drugs between 1975 and 1990, by their late 20s over 80% of Americans in 1990 had experimented with an illicit drug; 40% by age 27 had used cocaine; and 3.5% of all high school seniors had tried crack, admittedly a lower figure than a few years before. The decline in adolescent usage of drugs has been real, though the numbers of deaths associated with gang warfare, overdoses, and the like remains tragic. That it is easier to buy drugs or guns in many urban neighborhoods than a book is a national embarrassment.[72]

In recent years, programs such as Drug Awareness Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.), initiated in 1983 by Police Chief Darryl Gates in cooperation with the Los Angeles schools, has become one of the most publicized efforts to teach young children about the evils of illegal drugs. D.A.R.E. programs now exist in 2,000 communities in 49 states, offering opportunities for teachers, principals, police officers, and others to teach the young to avoid drugs. In 1993 Marko Grdesic won a poetry contest at the University Elementary School in Bloomington, Indiana, which read in part.

Don't take coke,
It's not a joke.

Drugs are bad,
They'll drive you mad.

Drug Resistance Education,
Has been taught all over the nation.[73]

There is very little hard evidence about the effectiveness of most drug use programs, including D.A.R.E., though the attempts to educate youth are obviously laudable.

Alcohol abuse often takes its toll in more quiet ways, which leads to fewer headlines than gun battles between drug-lords that take innocent lives. Since the 1950s, however, alcohol has been the most frequently used licit drug. A physician writing in the Scientific Temperance Journal in 1945 warned that media propaganda encouraged adolescents to drink. Though teenagers, especially boys, learned to drink by watching their parents, neighbors, and peers imbibe their favorite brew, "propaganda is one of the most pervasive forces of the modern world," he warned. "Deliberately devised to teach people to drink, such propaganda permeates the press, the movies, the magazines, the books, and the platform. It has popularized drinking among women and adolescents. It has caused a wolf to masquerade in the fleece of a lamb." Throughout the period, many writers claimed that drinking led to juvenile delinquency.[74]

High school teachers and administrators worried about student drinking in the 1950s. A contributor to a leading professional journal warned in 1954 that drinking was on the increase; one study said that 25% of 15 to 19 year olds used alcohol. "School authorities are aware that some adolescent students are excessive drinkers of alcohol beverages," he feared. "Undoubtedly many of these boys and girls are in danger of becoming problem drinkers or alcoholics." The percentage of youth who drank or drank excessively is unknown, but anyone who saw Blackboard Jungle watched the character played by actor Vic Morrow and his working class friends hit the bottle before enjoying their mayhem in the classroom and on the city streets. White teenagers still drink and binge drink more frequently than blacks.[75]

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, an increasing number of curriculum guides were produced on alcohol abuse, reflecting a growing belief that more teenagers drank. Most educators in the late 1960s, however, were concerned with the rising use of illicit drugs, especially marijuana, because it was so alien to white middle class life and, unlike alcohol, was so associated with youth and the counter-culture. Drinking was far more familiar and acceptable, since it was legal for adults and also for many young people living in states with a legal limit below age 21. Middle and upper class parents who thought pot an abomination often enjoyed an evening martini while still complaining about the hazards of high school beer or pot parties.[76]

From the 1940s to the present, alcohol remained the most popular licit drug for most adolescents. Like marijuana and many illicit drugs, alcohol use among seniors reached a peak in the late 1970s and then continually declined to this day. Studies in the

1970s discovered that about half of all 12-17 year olds had tried alcohol, with men more likely than women to drink or to drink heavily, and the non-college bound more likely to drink than the college bound. Drinking is harder to conceal at school, so it was more likely to occur outside of classes. But it remained the number one drug of choice among youth despite all the media attention given to marijuana, L.S.D., cocaine, amphetamines, and barbiturates through the years.[77]

Researchers from the University of Michigan emphasize that, contrary to what many citizens believe, alcohol use among teenagers did not increase as marijuana use began to decline in the late 1970s. Both marijuana and alcohol use have decreased. From 1975 to 1990, consistently approximately 90% of all seniors have tied alcohol. However, "Since 1980, the monthly prevalence of alcohol use among seniors has gradually declined, from 72% in 1980 to 54% in 1991. Daily use declined from a peak of 6.9% in 1979 to 3.6% in 1991; and the prevalence of drinking five or more drinks in a row during the prior two-week interval fell from 41% in 1983 to 30% in 1991."[78]

Although excessive drinking ruins many lives, contributes to many traffic accidents, and can pose severe health risks, steady improvements characterize the past decade. Federal pressure by the Reagan administration to raise state drinking ages to 21 seems to have been helped promote less drinking among teenagers. At the same time, adolescents in the 1990s consume about 1.1 billion cans of beer annually, and they drink one-third of all wine coolers.

Efforts to reduce drinking substantially will not be easy given adult example, the power of advertising, and the penchant of adolescents to experiment with drugs, licit and illicit.[79]

Reports on adolescents and cigarette smoking tend to be discouraging. Adult smoking increased dramatically as chewing tobacco declined after World War I, and adult usage again surged after World War II. It caused a scandal when women lit up in the 1920s, and smoking became after alcohol the second favored form of drug use among adolescents by the 1950s. What was true of alcohol was equally true of cigarettes; advertisers, movie stars, and others glamorized taking a puff, which became increasingly common among teenagers in the 1950s and 1960s. Many schools had the legal right to suspend students caught smoking or drinking in the 1950s and 1960s. By the late 1950s, however, a contributor to the California Journal of Secondary Education complained that many insolent students smoked despite the penalties. Even worse, claimed one angry writer in 1958, "Some teachers are in favor of a 'bull-pen' or 'bull-pit' where students can smoke openly."[80]

The right to have designated smoking areas at school was sometimes won by student activists in the late 1960s and early 1970s who demanded to be treated like adults. This sort of revolt against authority must have pleased Joe Camel and tobacco lobbyists and shareholders immensely. Traditionally, more males than females smoked, borne out by the first national surveys conducted in 1968-1969. In 1969, 15% of the boys and 8% of the girls smoked; a decade later, girls had the dubious honor of taking the lead, since apparently 13% of the boys and 11% of the boys smoked. Would the Flappers have been proud?[81]

Although lifetime, 30-day, and daily use of cigarette smoking has declined since the late 1970s, the drop has not been substantial. The lifetime rate peaked with the Class of 1977 (75.7%) and then declined very slowly to the 1990 rate (64.4%). Thirty-day use peaked for the Class of 1976 (38.8%) but has fluctuated somewhat, still standing at 29.4% for the Class of 1990. Those who smoke daily or a half-pack per day has also declined since the late 1970s, but the rates remain alarmingly high; in 1990 the daily use is 19.1% and a half-pack or more use is 11.3%. Very little headway was made in reducing the rates in the second half of the 1980s. A higher percentage of whites smoke than blacks, men and women smoke on a daily basis at about the same rate, but men more frequently smoke a half-pack or more daily.[82]

The decline in illicit drug use, alcohol use, and, to a lesser degree, cigarette use, among adolescents since the late 1970s should be regarded as a welcome trend. Still, one should remember that youth drug use is still incredibly high by the standards of the 1940s and 1950s or of major industrialized nations today. Billions of dollars are spent on educational programs that attempt to prevent licit and illicit drug use among adolescents, though these programs are rarely evaluated and are commonly ineffective. The failure of prevention contributes to an increase in health problems, spotty school attendance, and other maladies.[83]

The overall levels of school violence and vandalism reached an apogee in the 1970s, and so did various forms of licit and illicit drug use among teenagers. Longing for the days when schools had to contend with the "Troublesome 1 Percent" or when levels of drinking, smoking, or marijuana use were very low is hardly constructive for those who seek safe, drug-free schools today.

History provides perspectives, not definitive answers. Why youth misbehave, drink, smoke, and take so many risks with their lives and others' cannot be solved by some simple appeal to law and order, the establishment of a particular educational program, nostalgia for the past, or some other panacea. The sources of these dilemmas are multiple, defying simple solutions. By the early 1990s, 11% of all AIDS transmission to 17-19 year olds was through drug use, naturally viewed by many as a looming social and medical crisis. ~~Whether~~ "Education"--our commonplace response to every social problem--remains for many reformers an attractive and hopefully not ineffective response to these and other problems.[84]

Although the "drug war" briefly made the headlines in the 1980s, it quickly faded. No marshalling of human and material resources comparable to the Gulf War is likely any time soon, and the sale of licit and illicit drugs is so profitable and the demand so large that few politicians will assault the tobacco industry, beer and liquor monopolies, or drug cartels. And youth cannot be expected to behave perfectly when adults continue to enjoy watching violence in the movies and on television and to solve too many of their problems at home and abroad with guns or worse.

In the early 1990s, the Gallup Poll tried to gauge public

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opinion on the various National Goals for Education. Understanding various aspects of the following goal in historical context has been central to this essay: "By the year 2000, every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning." When asked to place all the goals in order of priority, 55% of those polled in 1990 and 63% in 1991 ranked this particular one "very high"--indeed, higher than for any of the other educational objectives. The next question asked "whether you think that goal by the year 2000 is very likely, likely, unlikely, or very unlikely?" In both years those responding "very likely" (5% and 4%) or "likely" (14% in both years) were the lowest percentages for all the National Goals. Those polled especially wanted safe, drug-free schools though were realistic about the magnitude of the problem.[85]

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